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LOOKING GREAT AT FIFTY

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BEST FOR JOBS

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APPOINTMENTS, 26 PAGES SECTION 3



Tory poll boost as 'feel-good' factor begins to return

By Peter Riddell

TORY support in the polls has jumped to its highest level since early 1993, according to the latest MORI poll for *The Times*. Dissatisfaction with the Government and John Major has declined to the lowest levels since just after the last election and the public is now more optimistic about the economy.

Support for Labour is six points down at 50 per cent, the lowest level since Tony Blair became party leader. The Liberal Democrats are unchanged on 12 per cent, reflecting the recent squeeze on their support. This is the best news that the Tories have had for a long time. However, the current gap between the parties of 17 points is still much greater than at the same stage of previous parliaments. Five years ago, Labour was a mere two points ahead, having been on level pegging.

There have been sharp variations in party support in recent polls. This partly reflects differences in how they are compiled. But a series of recent polls suggests that the last MORI survey was taken at a time of particular Labour strength and there has been a pick-up in Tory support recently. If some of these fluctuations are ignored, there has been a gradual underlying improvement in Tory support, of about three points over the past year, and a two point decline in Labour's rating. The Tories have been boosted by

rising living standards and falling unemployment, as shown by the latest drop announced yesterday, together with a marked decline in public hostility towards the Government and Mr Major. The MORI economic optimism index is now evenly balanced between the number expecting that the general economic condition of the country will improve and those expecting it to get worse. The index shows little change since the last poll but compares with an average of minus 15 points at the beginning of this year. In the past,

the index has only been positive for short periods. Moreover, the indices measuring voter attitudes towards the Government and Mr Major are now at their most favourable levels since September 1992 when sterling was forced out of the European exchange-rate mechanism. The balance of the number satisfied/less dissatisfied with the way the Government is running the country is now minus 47 points, compared with a range of minus 55 to 60 points in the summer. On the same basis, Mr Major's rating has improved to

minus 19 points compared with minus 30 points or more in recent months. Tory supporters approve of Mr Major's performance by well over three to one. Tony Blair's personal rating remains high, at plus 21 points, though Paddy Ashdown is ahead, at plus 25 points. MORI interviewed 1,515 adults at 152 sampling points on November 8 to 11. Voting intention figures exclude those who say they would not vote (8 per cent), are undecided (6 per cent) or who refused to say (2 per cent).

British troops to join relief force in Zaire

By Michael Evans, Philip Webster and Tom Rhodes in Washington

BRITAIN is to send troops to Zaire as part of an international force to save 1.5 million refugees from starvation. John Major spoke to President Clinton last night about the 90-minute meeting of the Cabinet's Overseas Policy and Defence Committee agreed that an urgent response was required. Although no decision has been made on the number of British troops to be deployed, it is expected to be a force of at least 1,000. The maximum contribution would be 3,500 troops from 5 Airborne Brigade, the rapid deployment unit trained to go anywhere at short notice. The statement from Downing Street came soon after the United States, under increasing pressure from Canada and France, announced the deployment of more than 3,000 American troops as part of a multinational rescue mission that could total 15,000 troops from 12 countries. In what was described as a tentative agreement, the American soldiers would provide logistical support while securing the airport at Goma in eastern Zaire to ensure the delivery of humanitarian relief to the refugees in need of food and shelter. America

would send up to 1,000 ground troops to Zaire and a further 2,000 in a support capacity outside Zaire. Mike McCurry, the White House press secretary, said: "The United States has been increasingly concerned that the humanitarian situation is deteriorating. The US is willing in principle to participate in a limited fashion." Britain's involvement came after weeks in which ministers have shown extreme reluctance to send British troops. Downing Street said that Britain would contribute "constructively" to a multinational force, provided a satisfactory plan could be worked out. The Government will discuss the scale and nature of the force with other potential contributors and there will be a crucial meeting at the United Nations in New York today. Ministers are under no illusions about the extreme challenge of launching a military operation in Central Africa. Downing Street said: "It is a complex and difficult situation. It is difficult terrain, there is no clear ceasefire and very little information is available." Senior Government sources said that ministers expected the role of the British troops to be more than just helping with food and humanitarian aid.

That could mean that British troops will be involved in clearing corridors to ensure that aid reaches the refugees. The sources said it was essential to get the nature of the mission established before Britain decided how many men to send. One possibility was to limit the force to a logistics battalion. However, with the momentum building up for a large multinational force, Britain is now expected to offer more troops. Field Marshal Sir Peter Inge, Chief of the Defence Staff, briefed the Cabinet committee last night on the military options. Army chiefs fully realise the difficulties of entering a war zone where more than 13,000 people have been massacred in the latest upsurge in fighting and where 1.5 million Hutu refugees from Rwanda face starvation in eastern Zaire. One Defence Ministry source said: "Fighting out there is a way of life. It is one of the things they do particularly well. Any operation will be terribly difficult because of the geographical position of Zaire, the lack of proper infrastructure and the onset of the rainy season."

French defied, page 19



Mohamed Al Fayed wraps himself in the Union flag outside Harrods yesterday

Howard rebuffed over Al Fayed's citizenship

By Frances Gibb, legal correspondent

MOHAMED Al Fayed and his brother won a crucial battle in their long-running fight for British citizenship yesterday when the Court of Appeal quashed the Home Secretary's refusal to grant it. The judges, led by the Master of the Rolls, said that Mr Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods, and his brother Ali, were not treated fairly because they were given no chance to answer objections to their application. Immediately after the ruling Mr Fayed accused the Home Secretary of intervening personally in the citizenship applications, and of being instrumental in setting up the Department of Trade and Industry inquiry in 1987 into the House of Fraser takeover. "Does he have a prejudice against me and is it because of his close family ties with Lorrho's former chief executive, Tiny Rowland?" He said that as a DTI minister, Michael Howard had not declared that Harry Landy, his second cousin, had been on the board of a major Lorrho subsidiary. A spokesman for Mr Howard

said that as far as the allegations on citizenship were concerned, which were the only ones within their remit, they were "complete nonsense". Giving judgment yesterday Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, backed by Lord Justice Phillips, said that in the interests of fairness, the Egyptian-born Fayed, who have lived in Britain for 30 years, should have been given a chance to meet any concerns before the final decision was made. "Justice must not only be done but be seen to be done in relation to the application of the Fayed," he said. "They have not had the fairness to which they are entitled."

The Home Secretary announced that he will appeal immediately to the House of Lords to overturn the decision. An appeal is unlikely before next summer. The ruling is a fresh embarrassment for Mr Howard, coming after a string of other adverse decisions in the courts. It is also politically sensitive, given that the Al Fayed are the source of many of current the "sleaze" allegations and are involved in the "cash for questions" accusations surrounding former ministers Neil Hamilton and Jonathan Aitken and Parliamentary lobbyist Ian Greer. But in a highly unusual move the judges issued a press release summarising their judgment and making clear that their ruling should not be taken as a personal attack on the Home Secretary. The judges' majority decision (Lord Justice Kennedy dissented) "reflects no discredit on those responsible for the decisions under review", they said. Mr Fayed gave out Christmas puddings as he posed for photographers at Harrods yesterday. "I have lived here for 30 years without incurring so much as a parking ticket," he said. "I provide worthwhile employment for 6,000 people, I pay £5 million in income tax every year and my companies contribute £25 million in tax to the national Exchequer."

Sights on revenge, page 5
Leading article, page 21

Labour wants British bedtime for children

By Alice Thomson, political reporter

LABOUR launched its debate on family life last night by calling for parents to agree on fixed bedtimes for children. Jack Straw, the Shadow Home Secretary, wants parents and schools to participate in a nationwide debate about when children should go to bed. He is concerned that children try to manipulate their parents by complaining that other pupils in their class are allowed to stay up later to watch television or go to parties. If parents knew the national average for bedtimes, it would give them more authority at home, Labour sources said. Their children could not then accuse them unjustly of being too "Victorian", and parents would know when they were being more liberal than the national trend. The initiative is part of a Labour campaign to keep children off the streets late at night and to stop youth hooliganism. The party has said that the roots of criminal behaviour are planted in childhood by lax parenting. Mr Straw made clear that he thought parents would welcome a national consensus on bedtimes, but he said that he did not think politicians

should impose mandatory restrictions which would in any event be impossible to enforce. "There should be much more public discussion about issues like the time children should be in bed. It is not exactly for politicians to tell parents what time to impose. But my experience is that parents would welcome more discussion in schools and in the media." Speaking after a press conference on the family, he said that parenting had become a taboo subject. "It is ridiculous

Continued on page 2, col 4



"Get a move on. We've got to be in bed in five minutes"

Ministers hail drop in jobless

By Philip Webster, political editor

SENIOR ministers last night hailed the prospect of unemployment falling below two million before the general election. A 40,800 reduction in October's figure brought the total to 2,030,000, the lowest for more than five and a half years. Although the drop was exaggerated by the start of the new Jobseeker's Allowance, which is thought to have delayed the counting of up to 15,000 claims, John Major said the statistic meant that Britain was "bouncing back" and showed the benefit of not tying employers' hands with a 48-hour working week. The row over the European Court of Justice directive intensified last night when Stephen Hughes, a Labour MEP, suggested that unlimited fines be imposed on Britain if it was not implemented. David Davis, the Minister for Europe, said: "God help us if these people are ever allowed to run Britain again. Labour want unlimited fines on Britain today. Labour in power would mean an unlimited tax on future prosperity." Ian McCartney, Labour's employment spokesman, said the unemployment figures were "as bogus as Tory promises on tax". The 32 changes to the way official figures were calculated had left ministers' claims "devoid of any credibility whatsoever". William Rees-Mogg, page 20
Jobless fall, page 27
Numbers game, page 31

Pledge to fight world famine

The United Nations World Food Summit convened in Rome yesterday and determined to fight famine, halving the number of hungry and malnourished people within 20 years. The summit is being attended by 194 nations, but only 50 are represented by heads of state or government. Pages 16, 23

Lottery watchdog criticised by MPs

Peter Davies, director-general of the National Lottery watchdog, Oflot, has been given a public dressing down by MPs for his failure to keep rigorous checks on Camelot. He was accused of being "dilatory" and "unimaginative" in his approach in his control over Camelot. Page 2

Personal pension compensation row

Three years after a review of mis-selling personal pensions began, only 1 per cent of those involved in the 500,000 most urgent cases have been offered compensation. Consumer groups expressed alarm at the delay after the details were published. Page 27

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Jury hears of 'ferocious murder'

Husband tells of his fight to keep beaten wife alive

By LIN JENKINS

THE husband of a woman who died after a ferocious beating in an Oxfordshire beauty spot recalled yesterday how he tried to keep her alive by asking her simple questions about their children.

Jonathan Thompson, 31, told the jury at Oxford Crown Court that he had run to where a neighbour had found his wife, Vikki, bleeding and bludgeoned. "I asked her what our children's names were. I asked her what our son's name was and she said 'Matthew'."

"I asked her our daughter's name and she said 'I don't know'. I kept asking her again and again 'What happened?'."

"She seemed to be trying to tell me something. I put my ear up to her mouth desperately trying to hear what she was saying and she said something like, 'It's twenty past five'. It did not make any sense to me," he told the jury.

Mrs Thompson, 30, of Ascot-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire, died six days later from multiple fractures of the skull without regaining consciousness. Mark Weston, 21, an odd-job man from the same village, denies murdering her on the Oxfordshire Way in the

afternoon of August 12 last year.

Mr Thompson, whose son is now nine and daughter Jenny six, said it had been an ordinary family. Saturday when his wife went to her part-time job in The Lamb pub in the neighbouring village of Shipton-under-Wychwood.

When their Shetland bitch, Daisy, returned alone he was not alarmed. "I assumed she was just around the corner. You have to imagine the peace and tranquillity of the village, the safety we felt," he said.

However, when Matthew voiced his concern, Mr Thompson, a computer salesman, put the children in the car and went to look for her. He repeatedly returned home to see if she was there. When she was not he enlisted the help of neighbours and friends, left her a note and took his mobile phone with him so that he could be contacted.

"I was pretty panicked about where she was. It was clear there was something wrong and I was worried," he said. When Carolyn Timms, a neighbour, found Mrs Thompson's bracelet with blood on it discarded on the

footpath, the police were called and the search widened.

Mrs Thompson, who was due to take up a place at Oxford Brookes University, to study for a degree in mathematics and computing, was fatally attacked the day after the celebration for her ninth wedding anniversary.

Nicholas Browne, QC, for the prosecution, said she was murdered when she came across Mr Weston, who described himself as a loner, in Shipton Lane, part of the Oxfordshire Way. "In that secluded pathway something happened. We may never know precisely what. Some words must have been spoken at the start between Vikki Thompson and Mark Weston when, in an impulsive, sudden and ferocious attack, Mark Weston lost his temper with her."

He hit her repeatedly with a rock or stone. "She screamed for about 30 to 45 seconds and was then battered and beaten with the object further to her face and head. She was knocked unconscious in the first violent attack," Mr Browne said.

Mr Weston dragged her body from the path, lifted her over a barbed wire fence, dragged her 40 yards across a field and over another barbed wire fence, dumping her at the foot of a steep railway embankment, he said.

She must have regained consciousness and was again subjected to a ferocious attack. "He must have attacked her again, battering her head against rocks or stones."

"Her injuries were quite appalling, particularly to the face and to the head, but all of her body and her back and her legs." He said Mr Weston, who had been seen staring at Mrs Thompson's house a few days earlier, escaped across the railway line leaving some "very incriminating footprints" in the field.

The trial continues.



Jonathan Thompson and his wife, Vikki. "She seemed to be trying to tell me something," he said



Peter Baker yesterday: he drank a bottle of wine a day on a trip to Monte Carlo

Bottle of wine a day 'is bad for business'

By ADRIAN LEE

IT WAS entirely proper for an executive who binged on a bottle of wine a day during a business trip to be refused a new job, a former physician to the Queen told a court yesterday. One might expect that level on New Year's Eve, or at a wild party, but it was far too much for a professional making important decisions, said Sir Anthony Dawson, who held the post at Buckingham Palace from 1982 to 1993.

Giving expert evidence on behalf of Dr Georges Kaye, who is being sued by Peter Baker over a company medical examination conducted in 1991, Sir Anthony said the results of blood tests pointed strongly to alcohol abuse.

Mr Baker, 53, of Bookham, Surrey, has admitted drinking a bottle of wine a day for a week at a festival in Monte Carlo shortly before the examination. He is claiming damages for alleged breach of care after losing the chance of a £45,000 job as head of international sales for NBC Europe.

Sir Anthony said that, for a businessman, the amount of alcohol consumed was excessive and would alter his ability to make "good intellectual judgements". Sir Anthony, who has a Harley Street practice, is chairman of council of the British Heart Foundation. He accepted that Mr Baker might not have been at risk of long-term liver damage. But he said Dr Kaye had been right to recommend that he should not be employed as head of international sales. Mr Baker might not drink a large amount every time, but "would be unpredictable on other occasions when travelling".

Sir Anthony added: "Much has been made about New Year's Eve and wild parties and changes in liver function. That's the sort of level we are talking about." Blood tests on Mr Baker had shown abnormalities which would have required more than just a week's heavy drinking, he said.

The case continues.

Policeman accused of felling footballer

By A STAFF REPORTER

A WATFORD footballer was struck by a policeman as he congratulated team-mates on their second-round Coca-Cola Cup win, a court was told yesterday. The officer was said to have mistaken him for an overexcited fan attacking a player.

Watford defeated Bournemouth during a penalty shoot-out at the Dorset club's ground in October last year. Kevin Phillips, a centre forward who was not playing because of injury, ran on to the pitch to celebrate with fellow players. But Acting Inspector John Green, in charge of match security, allegedly hit him with a truncheon and Phillips fell to his knees.

Michael Spong, for the prosecution, told magistrates at Wimborne, Dorset, that the attack was "unnecessary, unwarranted and unprovoked". Mr Green, of Bournemouth, denies two charges of common assault.

Mr Spong said Phillips "playfully jumped on the back of one player and went to embrace another. Then he and others turned to go back to the players' entrance at the side of the pitch."

"It was at this point it is alleged Acting Inspector Green approached Mr Phillips from behind and proceeded to hit him on his left shoulder."

Phillips, of Stevenage, Hertfordshire, said: "We started to walk towards the tunnel. That was when I felt a blow to my left shoulder. I felt instant pain and turned around to see a police officer standing in front of me with his truncheon out. I asked, 'What are you doing? I'm one of the players.' He responded by saying, 'I don't care, get off the pitch.'"

"My manager, Glenn Roeder, charged in front, asking what the officer was doing and saying 'He's one of my players.'"

Phillips, who had been wearing his team's blue tracksuit and anorak, agreed under cross-examination that he might have looked like a Watford fan as he joined the celebrations.

The case continues.

Labour leader forgoes £60,000 chance to become Baron Blair of Blair

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

NEW Labour, old title. The Leader of the Opposition has been presented with a once-in-a-millennium opportunity to acquire the ancient title of Baron Blair of Blair - and still remain committed to abolishing the rights of hereditary peers to sit in the House of Lords.

The Scottish barony of Blair, dating from the middle of the 12th

century, is to be sold to the highest bidder at auction. The Borwick family, of Blair House in Dalry, Ayrshire, which owns the title, is now so distantly related to the Blair line that it has decided to sell.

The new owner would receive nothing more than the title itself, but Manorial Auctioneers hope to raise £60,000 at the sale next month. The title is being sold by Veronica Borwick, whose late hus-

band, Lieutenant-Colonel Michael Borwick, was only distantly related to a branch of the Blair dynasty, which died out earlier this century.

"We are only selling because it is obsolete really," Mrs Borwick said. "The last Miss Blair never married and died childless, so the title came to my husband's family. But my sons were killed in a car crash."

She admitted that the prospect of a Prime Minister called Blair made

this a good time to sell and hoped that the Labour leader, or a wealthy benefactor on his behalf, might stump up for the title.

Mr Blair's office was quick to dismiss such talk. "The only title that Tony Blair is after is not one you have to pay for," it said. Neither did any of Labour's wealthy supporters appear ready last night to snap up the title as an amusing Christmas present for

him. "Tony Blair is a sensible man and I'm sure he's not in the slightest bit interested," the broadcaster Melvyn Bragg said. The prospect of Baron Bragg of Blair was also unappealing.

Mrs Borwick said she would welcome any new purchaser to Blair House and take them on a guided tour of the gardens, known as Blair Policies. "I'd welcome Tony Blair in and give him a cup of

tea," she said. "I have the Blair Society of North America over here every now and again. They are very clanish."

Blair House nestles in the valley of Dalry, a name which derives from the Gaelic Dail-righ, meaning King's Valley. The barony was originally granted by King William of the Scots to Jean Françoise in about 1150. Jean's son changed his name to Blair and is believed to

have married one of the daughters of King John. His descendants fought with William Wallace and then Robert Bruce. The subsequent history of the family was colourful and included a murky period in the 16th century when residents of the estate were accused of witchcraft. In 1847 the income of the barony was £2,200, but the new owner will have to aspire to social rather than pecuniary advancement.

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Appeal Court turns down claim on HIV letter compensation

BY FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

MORE than one hundred women who claim they were traumatised by letters informing them they had been treated by a HIV-positive health worker had their hopes of compensation dashed by the Court of Appeal yesterday.

The 114 women were among 900 patients in the Greater Manchester area treated by the health worker, who worked at different times in the obstetrics departments of Trafford General Hospital and Tameside General Hospital before the risk was discovered. Nine of the women, who cannot be identified, brought a test case against the authorities in January last year and High Court judge Mr Justice French ruled the health authorities had acted negligently in informing the patients by letter.

His decision paved the way for all 114 to seek compensation for nervous shock. But yesterday the test cases were struck out when the Court of Appeal judges reversed Mr Justice French's decision, and ruled that the health authorities had behaved responsibly.

The ruling was welcomed by lawyers for the health authorities involved as sending out a signal that the courts are taking a tougher line over

what some see as increasingly bizarre claims. Sheila Bennett, a partner with Hempsons, said: "This was a very strong judgment from Lord Justice Brooke and the first time the courts have put their views quite so bluntly."

"It appears they are getting little bit tired of what are almost ambulance-chasing claims. That's how we interpret the judgment."

When in March 1991 Tameside and Glossop Health Authority and Trafford Health Authority discovered the condition of the health worker, who cannot be identified for legal reasons, they wrote to all but the most 'vulnerable' patients telling them of the risk and offering HIV testing and counselling.

Of the 900, none has tested positive for HIV but 114 issued writs against the authorities claiming they were traumatised by the letters and should have been told of the risk they had been exposed to face-to-face.

Allowing the authorities' appeal, Lord Justice Kennedy said: "The judge found the best way of informing the patients was face-to-face and informing by letter carried a considerable risk some individuals might suffer psychi-

atric injury."

"In my judgment the question was not whether in an ideal world it was better to inform individual patients face-to-face but whether, in all the circumstances, the health authorities were negligent in taking the procedure they did. It is my view that the health authorities concerned behaved in a responsible way."

Lord Justice Brooke commented: "The judge was wrong to hold the authorities negligent because they did not use the best method. There was simply no adequate well of professional experience on which the courts could draw in this case."

Lord Justice Nourse said: "The only conclusion that can be reasonably drawn was that the authorities were not negligent in behaving as they did." Counsel for the health authorities, Keith Armitage, QC, earlier urged the Appeal Court to overturn Mr Justice French's decision as against the weight of the evidence.

He said of the patients' claims: "It is likely that the patients have been advised that they have no redress for the risk of exposure. They were reduced to complaining about the method of communicating."

Nurse killed in Indian air crash loved to travel

By Stephen Farrell

KAREN MCCOY, the British children's nurse killed in the Indian mid-air collision, was described by her family yesterday as an adventurer who enjoyed travelling the world. Miss McCoy, 26, a passenger on the Saudia Boeing 747, was flying from India back to Saudi Arabia, where she worked at the King Fahd Hospital in Riyadh.

A few weeks ago she wrote to her family in Northfield, Birmingham, saying she was looking forward to river rafting in Nepal on a holiday from her first job abroad. Her father, Michael, 53, and stepmother, Enid, 63, admitted they feared the worst even before police arrived at their home on Tuesday night.

"When I saw it on the news, I just knew that she was on board," said Mr McCoy. Mrs McCoy, who is also a nurse, said that her stepdaughter had previously visited Greece, Turkey and Spain and planned to stay a further year in Saudi Arabia before moving on to New Zealand. "We are just devastated by the loss of our lovely daughter. She was very good at her job and very caring. She was full of fun, had a good sense of humour and loved life and parties," she said.

know when they will be able to tell us that Karen is definitely dead, but we know. She was on the passenger list and had gone through customs and it would take an absolute miracle for her to have not been on board. At least we know that she lived life to the full and had been doing what she wanted."

She said that her stepdaughter followed her into the profession after leaving school. She trained at Selly Oak and Queen Elizabeth hospitals then moved to Birmingham Children's Hospital before taking up a job at the paediatric intensive care unit in Riyadh 13 months ago. In the letter home she told her parents of her sadness at the death of one of her young patients, named Abdullah.

Former colleagues at Birmingham Children's Hospital described Miss McCoy as reliable and popular. Trudy Horton, 32, a staff nurse, said: "She was always one for having a good laugh and a good time."

Miss McCoy's brother Robert, a soldier with the Royal Logistic Corps in Dülmen, northern Germany, was due home yesterday on compassionate leave.

"The British consuls don't

Indian disaster, page 18



Karen McCoy with a patient at the King Fahd Hospital in Riyadh

Driver rammed by M66 robbers

By Paul Wilkinson

AN ELDERLY woman was recovering in hospital last night after two youths rammed her car and robbed her. The woman, 73, suffered a broken nose, bruising and a cut face which needed stitching when she tried to stop the thieves driving off.

Police said she was lucky not to have been more seriously hurt, as another vehicle was accelerating along the slip-road at the moment she was thrown clear. The incident happened on Tuesday night as she was driving on to the M66 near Bury, in Greater Manchester. She was returning home to Liverpool after a visit to her daughter.

Last night, she said: "I'm only sorry I didn't belt them."

The woman who asked only to be identified as Anne, was returning at 9.40pm from her weekly trip to see her daughter Sarah when her car was bumped from behind by two 18-year-olds driving a small orange car. "I pulled over to check the damage and sud-

denly there were two young men pressing their faces against the window," she said, speaking from her hospital bed in Merseyside. When she got out to examine the bumper, one of the men stole her handbag from the passenger seat, containing more than £80 cash, she said.

"I realise now that they deliberately bumped my car. I ran and got hold of their car door to try and wrench it off, but of course I couldn't. The driver then put his foot down and I was dragged towards the motorway."

The robbers sped off, leaving her in the road, bleeding, with facial injuries and cuts to her knees and elbows. A passer-by drove her back to her daughter, a doctor, who gave her a dozen stitches in her nose and face.

Yesterday Anne said: "I'm sorry I didn't have the strength to attack them back. I would say to them, they're going to grow old one day and God help them if it happens to them."

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Appeal against refusal of British citizenship is latest in a string of clashes with the establishment

Al Fayed set sights on revenge after takeover report

By Andrew Pierce, Political Correspondent

MOHAMED Al Fayed, who once courted Margaret Thatcher and the Tory leadership with an open cheque book, is now intent on inflicting revenge on the establishment figures whose approval he so desperately craved.

The Tories were to learn to their cost that Mr Al Fayed expected his generosity to be reciprocated after donating £250,000 before the 1987 general election.

When John Major refused to rescind the damning Department of Trade and Industry report into Mr Al Fayed's takeover of the House of Fraser, the die was cast. For the past two years Mr Al Fayed has maintained a stream of allegations which have wounded the Government and caused two ministers to resign over the cash-for-questions affair.

But in January 1985, one year after acquiring the ownership of Harrods, it all seemed different. Mr Al Fayed took tea with Mrs Thatcher at Downing Street with the Sultan of Brunei, reputedly the world's richest man. Mr Al Fayed, 63, brought up in

Alexandria, thought he had entered the privileged inner circle. Sterling was under pressure on the foreign exchanges. The Sultan, according to Mr Al Fayed's associates, was coaxed during the course of the conversation by a persuasive Prime Minister not to convert billions of pounds into dollars to prevent a devastating run on the pound. Mrs Thatcher sent Mr Al Fayed a letter of gratitude.

Mr Al Fayed was persuaded by his friend Lord McAlpine of West Green, the Tory treasurer, to make a donation to the Conservative Party. Now he had become the owner of the world's most famous store it seemed the right thing to do. He wrote a cheque for £250,000.

But in April 1987, despite his protests, the Department of Trade and Industry ordered an inquiry into his acquisition of the House of Fraser. Mr Al Fayed felt betrayed. The DTI decision began the slow transformation from Tory acolyte to shrill whistle-blower on alleged corruption in high places.

But publicly, at least, Mr Al

Fayed was still assiduously courting favours. Invitations were issued to MPs and journalists to be his guest at the Ritz in Paris. He always took the precaution of keeping receipts from his guests room accounts in case they were later to prove valuable.

The gentrification of the Egyptian businessman continued. A Scottish Highlands castle in 30,000 acres of grounds was acquired. Shooting parties were regular fixtures. There is an estate in Surrey, countless royal warrants, a yacht, a jet and a helicopter, which have been put at the disposal of his influential friends.

He has nurtured and restored British institutions. When John Paul Getty bid £1 million for the Three Graces, Mr Al Fayed put up £7.8 million to keep it in Britain. He made a donation to the restoration fund of Hampton Court Palace. When it was completed he handed a 1634 painting by Paul Morel to the Queen.

His sponsorship of the Royal Windsor Horse Show brought him into contact with



Mohamed Al Fayed: found it hard, as a foreigner, to enter privileged circles

the Queen and other members of the Royal Family. He was in his element. The Royal Marsden and Great Ormond Street hospital have received millions of pounds. Mr Al Fayed, a gifted self-publicist, carries out much of his charitable work away from the glare of publicity. He resurged Punch, a veritable Brit-

ish publications, and acquired Viva, a national radio station.

The acquisitions have done little to raise his standing in British society. It was because he still felt a foreigner that he applied for British citizenship in the first place more than 30 years after moving to Britain.

The public face of Mr Al Fayed is the smiling, avuncu-

lar, figure, who poses at the opening of the Harrods sale and who goes behind the counter to cut the salmon.

Even if he eventually secures his elusive passport, it is clear that Mr Al Fayed will not be accepted by the establishment.

Leading article, page 21

Lords must rule on question of natural justice

By Frances Gibb, Legal Correspondent

THE Fayed brothers' battle for citizenship is to be decided by the House of Lords after the Court of Appeal yesterday created what the Home Secretary's lawyers called a "free-standing right to natural justice".

Lord Woolf, the Master of the Rolls, and Lord Justice Phillips quashed Michael Howard's refusal to grant the Egyptian-born brothers citizenship, saying that Mohamed Al Fayed and his brother, Ali, respectively chairman and deputy chairman of Harrods, had not been treated fairly because they had been given no chance to answer objections to their application. In the interests of fairness, the brothers, who have lived in Britain for 30 years, should have been given that opportunity before the final decision was made, Lord Woolf said.

"Justice must not only be done but be seen to be done in relation to the application of the Fayed's," Lord Woolf said. "They have not had the fairness to which they are entitled and the rule of law must be upheld."

The Home Secretary announced an appeal. But the House of Lords will be deciding an issue which goes far wider than the personal circumstances of the Fayed brothers: how far procedures for British citizenship under the British Nationality Act 1981 should pay regard to the concept of natural justice.

If upheld, yesterday's ruling would mean that applicants for citizenship would have to have the chance to answer any objections before a final decision is made.

Stuart Catchpole, for Mr Howard, said that the court majority had held there was a "free-standing right to natural justice which can only be excluded by express words in a statute. In the Secretary of State's submission, that is a new approach; it is worthy of debate in the House of Lords."

Giving judgment, Lord Woolf said that the refusal in February 1995 of the brothers'

application was damaged and because of their "high public profile" had particular significance.

"The damage is greater because it is not in dispute that they comply with the formal requirements, other than that of good character, the relevance of which to the refusal is not known."

The case turned on the legal construction of the British Nationality Act 1981. The Act specifically relieves the Home Secretary of any obligation to give reasons for a refusal of citizenship, and protects decisions from appeal review.

But Lord Woolf said that did not relieve the Secretary of State from an obligation to be fair by giving applicant notice of factors weighing against him, so could address them.

If that were not the case, a minister would be able to unfairly decide a person lawfully could be refused citizenship, but the courts would be unable to do anything about it, he said. Lord Woolf said that neither of the brothers had ever been informed of what were the aspects of their application which gave rise to difficulties or reservations. They were merely informed that "after careful consideration, your application has been refused".

In a dissenting judgment, Lord Justice Kennedy agreed with Stephen Richards, counsel for Mr Howard, that it was within the Home Secretary's discretion to refuse to give reasons when rejecting an application for naturalisation.

He said the Secretary of State "when called upon to exercise his discretion must be relieved not only of any obligation to give reasons at the time of or immediately after makes his decision, but also any duty to indicate to applicant at any early stage why he is minded to refuse".

Echoing Mr Richards's argument, Lord Justice Kennedy said why, if Parliament intended otherwise, the Act did not expressly say so.

Wife denies family bond with Howard's father

By Andrew Pierce

THE wife of Harry Landy attacked Mohamed Al Fayed yesterday for dragging her husband into the controversy over the Egyptian businessman's citizenship application. Gertrude Landy, 82, said her husband had had no contact with Michael Howard, his second cousin, for years.

Mr Al Fayed claimed yesterday that Mr Howard, who was a junior minister at the Department of Trade and Industry when it announced an inquiry into his acquisition of the House of Fraser in April 1987, had failed to declare the family interest.

However, Mrs Landy said: "They have nothing in common. If they met they would have nothing to say to each other. They don't speak on the telephone. They have had no contact for years."

But according to Mr Al Fayed they were not just distant relatives, there was a blood debt. Mr Landy had sponsored the naturalisation application for the Home Secretary's father, Bernat Hecht, one of thousands of Jews who fled to Britain from Romania at the outbreak of the war. Mr Howard's grandfather perished in the concentration camps.

Mr Al Fayed also alleged that Mr Howard, as Home Secretary, had personally intervened three times in his citizenship application. But this has been denied by Mr Howard.

Mr Landy, the former director of London City & Westcliff Properties, a subsidiary of Lorrho, chaired by Mr Al Fayed's sworn business rival Tiny Rowland, introduced the Home Secretary's parents.

They lived in a small Jewish community in Llanelli. But Mr Landy left in 1935 before Mr Howard was born. Mr Howard's father was naturalised as a British citizen in December 1947 and took an oath of allegiance in Llanelli in January 1948. Hecht was changed to Howard.

But Mrs Landy said: "My husband is ill, having suffered a stroke. Otherwise he could speak for himself. But of course he would have signed the naturalisation application."

"We were close then. It was a small Jewish community. Nobody had much. We pulled

together. But we are not close now. I hardly even remember Harry signing the papers. Michael's mother was Harry's first cousin. It hardly makes them close."

In October 1994, Mr Howard outlined his involvement in the citizenship applications. He said the applications of Ali Fayed, Mohamed's brother, had been referred to him on January 13, 1994, by the office of Charles Wardle, then Immigration Minister.

Mr Howard saw Mr Wardle on January 21 and confirmed

that the decision would be taken by him.

The case next came to his attention on April 21 when Mr Wardle's office referred his intended decision to Mr Howard. "I made it clear that the decision was to be taken by Mr Wardle but suggested further inquiries should be made before a final decision was reached," Mr Howard said in October 1994.

The decision was eventually taken by Nicholas Baker, who replaced Mr Wardle at the Home Office.

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US program aims to follow chess example Computer prepares to trump bridge players

By Nigel Hawkes
Science Editor

BRIDGE players could soon be suffering the same humiliations as chess masters, an American scientist has claimed. Bridge-playing computers, long derided as inept, could soon be breathing down their necks.

Matthew Ginsberg, of the University of Oregon, told New Scientist that bridge programs would compare with the best human players in a couple of years. That would certainly be dramatic progress, because up to now they have been pretty useless, according to Robert Sheehan, The Times Bridge Correspondent. He says that programs designed to teach people how to play a hand at bridge are helpful, but programs that attempt to play the game are not much good.

The problem is that bridge is a game of incomplete information. Unlike chess, where the position of all the pieces is plain, in bridge you have to guess what cards your opponents hold. To play bridge requires working out a plan in advance, while chess can be played by looking forward a few moves at a time.

In addition, Mr Sheehan said, much more effort has been put into chess programs because it has been used as a testbed for strategies in artificial intelligence. No similar



Bridge, unlike chess, is a game of incomplete information which demands pre-planning

investment in manpower has gone into bridge programs.

Nobody has yet programmed a computer to take part in the bidding round in bridge, which determines which cards shall be trumps and how many tricks must be won to satisfy a contract. By the end of this round, one player, the declarer, will have outbid the rest to win the contract — which might be to win nine tricks with clubs as trumps.

At this point the declarer's partner's hand is laid face upwards on the table, and the declarer plays this hand together with his own, trying to win the promised number of tricks. Bridge programs so far

all take the part of the declarer, using computer power to work out the best strategy to win the tricks.

Dr Ginsberg's program is based on the searching power of the computer. "Computers search better than we do and the most successful bridge programs should exploit that," he told New Scientist.

His program aims to search all possible card combinations in a game. That is an impossibly large number, so he incorporates ways of reducing it. Small cards that will never win tricks are lumped together, and the computer stops searching once it has found a set of plays that will win the

required number of tricks. After each play, the computer calculates afresh, mentally reshuffling and revealing the opponents' cards and working out which card works best, on average, over a large number of potential hands they may actually hold. The approach is not subtle, nor is it based on the way humans play bridge, but Dr Ginsberg says it works.

He tried it against a teaching program called Bridge Master, designed to assess how well a player tackles 180 different hands. He said it performed far better than any other bridge program. "It's not an incremental improvement," he said, "it's a whole new standard."

He admitted that the program misses a lot of the game's subtlety, such as playing a card to find out where another one is. "We're trying to walk," he said. "We're not trying to run in the Olympics."

Other bridge programs have adopted different approaches, attempting for example to model how a human player operates. Dr Ginsberg rejected this in favour of a number-crunching approach. He saw no reason why programs should not also take part in the bidding round. "In a couple of years, I think that computers will be able to play with the best of them."

Leading article, page 23
Bridge column, page 49



Beaufort Cottage from Golding Constable's House, which sold for £106,000

Villagers add authentic view to Constable sketch

AN UNRECORDED sketch by Constable sold for £106,000 yesterday after the view was identified as showing East Bergholt, Suffolk (John Shaw writes).

Three villagers recognised a row of houses in the study, and the precise location added to its value. The picture, only 5½ in by 7½ in, had been estimated at no more than £50,000.

Catherine Broom-Lynne, an artist, and Bruce and Gillian Walker, Constable

enthusiasts, identified the scene. The hitherto unknown picture, now entitled *Beaufort Cottage from Golding Constable's House*, probably painted in the summer of 1811, was bought anonymously. Golding Constable was the father of the artist, who was born in East Bergholt.

David Moore-Gwyn, of Sotheby's, said it had come to auction from America. Graham Reynolds, a Constable scholar, confirmed it was

genuine and Mrs Broom-Lynne was asked if she could identify the location. She and Mr and Mrs Walker walked around the village looking at houses. Mrs Walker said: "The viewpoint is outside his father's house. He must have sat in the road looking across the village green."

The jigsaw was completed by Ian Fleming Williams, another Constable scholar, who saw parallels with two pictures in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Waitrose quail eggs are hatch of the day

By Robin Young

AN AMATEUR poultry breeder has managed to hatch ten quail from eggs she bought at her local supermarket.

Ann Brewer put nearly all the four dozen eggs from Waitrose in Petersfield, Hampshire, in an incubator after she opened one and saw it was fertilised. Mrs Brewer, of Froxfield, said yesterday: "When I cracked one egg open I noticed it had a fertilisation mark, so I thought it would be worth a try."

"Some of the quail farmers obviously have male birds running with the hens. These eggs had come from Lancashire, but they would be fresh enough to incubate for a week or two."

"It does not mean that if you buy eggs from a supermarket you will find a baby bird inside when you break it open, but anyone who tries to incubate quail eggs could be lucky. I shall be selling my ten quail just as they hatch."

The same experiment with hens' eggs would certainly fail, since there is little or no chance of them being fertilised. A spokeswoman for Waitrose said: "The hatchings are surprising, but obviously not impossible."

"On most farms chick separation would make fertilisation highly unlikely, and any fertilised embryos would be likely to be killed by the chilling process. They are not harmful in any way."

Littlewoods catalogue had 1,000 misleading prices

By Paul Wilkinson

A BED offered at £179.99 in a Littlewoods sale catalogue had been on offer for £30 less in the mail order firm's standard index listing. It was one of more than 1,000 items wrongly priced in the supplementary winter catalogue issued by the Merseyside home shopping firm, magistrates at Widnes, Cheshire, were told yesterday.

Littlewoods admitted seven specimen charges under the 1987 Consumer Protection Act of publishing misleading prices in last winter's sale catalogue. It was fined a total of £12,250 and ordered to pay costs of £2,114.

Ian Moore, prosecuting for Cheshire Trading Standards Department, said that instead of customers getting the reductions they were expecting, some goods had been increased in price, many were just the same and the majority had never been on offer before. A pair of running shoes

advertised in the index catalogue at £32.99 were £1 more in the winter sale supplement. A pair of curtains priced at £44.99 in the Littlewoods Home Shopping volume were £49.99 in the supplement and a waterproof jacket allegedly reduced to £17.99 had not been offered for sale before.

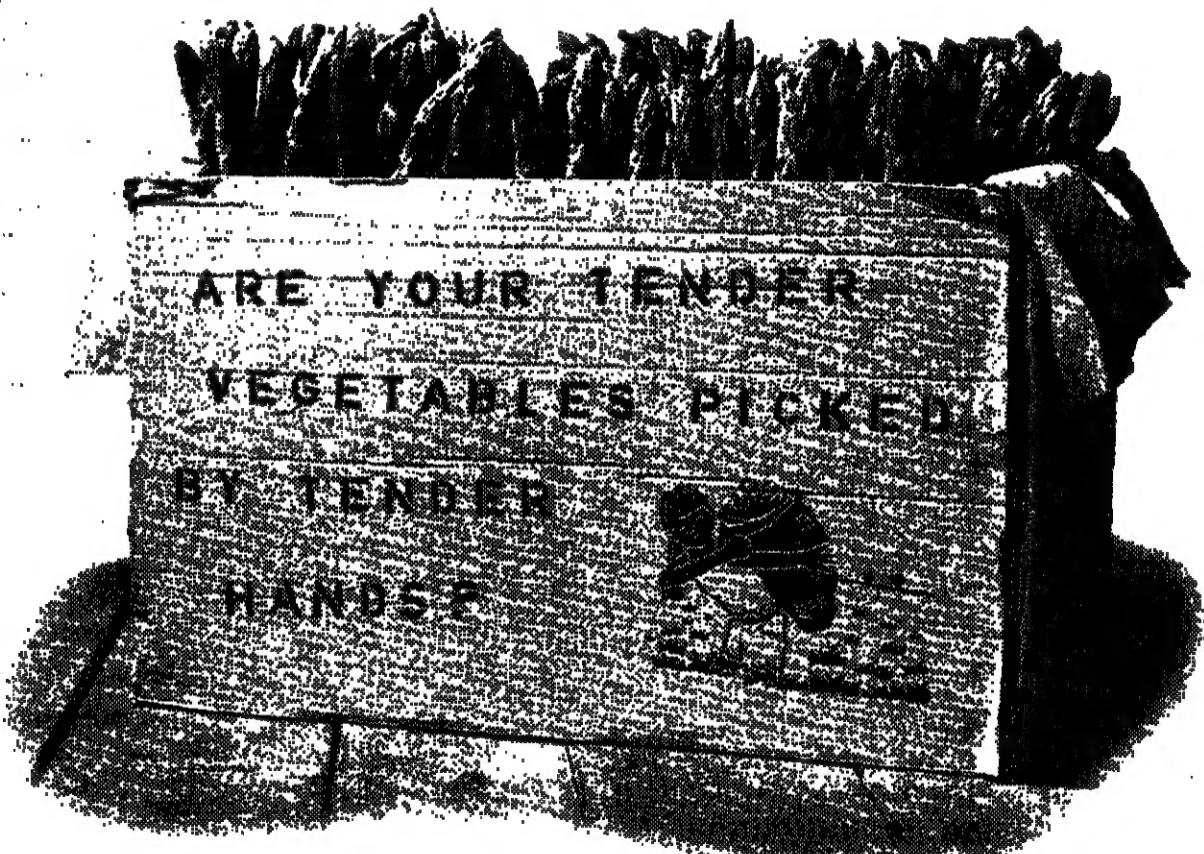
Mr Moore said the offences came to light after John Almond, from Widnes, decided to check prices in the supplementary catalogue issued in October last year against the 1995 spring and winter Littlewoods Home Shopping and Index catalogues.

He reported several discrepancies in trading standards officials, who then checked every item in the supplement against the full-price catalogues. They found that in the Littlewoods catalogue only 21 per cent of the prices were reductions, 10 per cent were the same price and 69 per cent

had never appeared in previous catalogues. In the index catalogue 7 per cent were the same, 4 per cent had been increased in price and 64 per cent were fresh goods.

David Hewitt, for Littlewoods, said none of the breaches was deliberate. The company had now changed its supplementary catalogues and the situation would never arise again. It had not been intended to reduce many of the items in the catalogues and the other items were special offers. He acknowledged that anyone reading the front of the brochure with "Don't miss massive savings" and "Big winter sale" would assume all the items offered had been reduced.

After the hearing, Tim Rogers, head of Littlewoods media services said: "Mistakes were made in the production of the Autumn-Winter 1995 sales brochure."



Ica, Peru. A young girl is taken from school to work alongside her mother in the asparagus fields.

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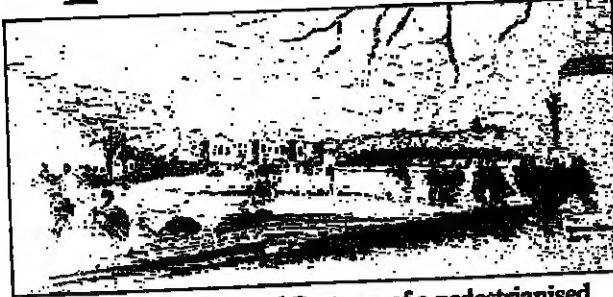
Foster picked to produce masterplan for London

BY MARCUS BINNEY

SIR NORMAN FOSTER is to produce a plan for central London that will include extensive pedestrianisation and widening of pavements. Taxi drivers will hate it, but pedestrians and cyclists will have much-improved conditions.

Westminster planning committee last night chose Foster and Partners as the team of consultants to advise on improvements to Trafalgar Square, Parliament Square, Whitehall and the Victoria Embankment. Sir Norman recently advocated a scheme for closing the road between Horse Guards Parade and St James's Park.

He won against fierce competition from his arch rival, Lord Rogers, and other leading practices including MacCormac Jamieson Pritchard, the conservation architect Donald Insall, and Llewellyn Davies and EDAW, two of the runners-up in the recent competition to replan the centre of Manchester after the IRA



A sketch by Foster and Partners of a pedestrianised Horse Guards Parade, now a car park on weekdays

bomb blast. Sir Norman's victory over his former partner Richard Rogers is the latest round in an intense architectural rivalry. While Sir Norman is the clear leader in world terms, with offices in Berlin, Frankfurt, Hong Kong and Tokyo, Lord Rogers has kept the edge in Britain.

Ennobled recently as a Labour peer he has remained a favourite architect of Tory ministers, notably John Gummer, who has approved Lord Rogers's proposals for a 20-storey block of luxury flats on the South Bank, and Michael

Heseltine and Virginia Bottomley, who as millennium commissioners chose him to design the giant domed tent at Greenwich for the millennium festival.

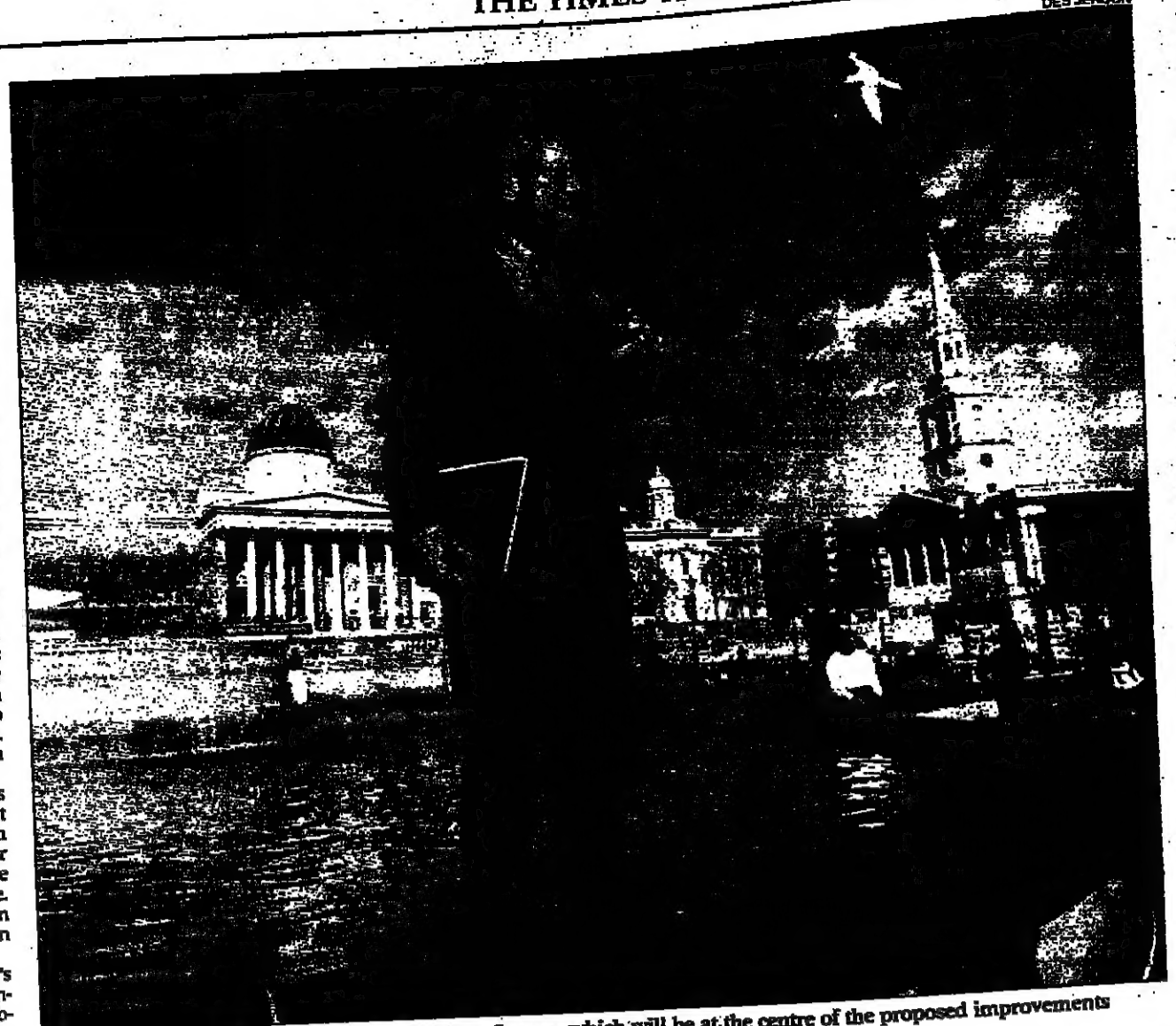
Westminster's decision will come as a cruel blow to Lord Rogers, who has made the replanning of central London a personal crusade for the past ten years. At the Royal Academy he exhibited proposals for a visionary remodelling of the Victoria Embankment, suggesting it should be closed to traffic in front of Somerset House, creating a giant river-

side promenade. More recently Lord Rogers has put forward detailed proposals for removing traffic from three sides of Trafalgar Square and turning Northumberland Avenue into London's answer to Barcelona's Ramblas, with its wide central walkway.

The contract for the redesign was highly sought after. A triumphant Sir Norman stood in Trafalgar Square yesterday and showed his audience two blank pages in his sketch book. "We have no preconceptions, no designs. We come to the task with an open mind," he said.

"Certainly our proposals will contain a strong element of pedestrianisation. My team includes those responsible for the highly successful scheme of paving in Leicester Square. We will complete our plans in 12 months and be holding an exhibition next summer."

Ironically, it is Foster's blank sheet of paper, compared with Lord Rogers' elaborate plans, that may have won him the commission.



Sir Norman Foster yesterday in Trafalgar Square, which will be at the centre of the proposed improvements

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Princess to address leprosy meeting

By A STAFF REPORTER

DIANA, Princess of Wales, is to address the third anniversary meeting of international leprosy organisations next Monday. Her speech, to be made in London, is one of three public engagements announced yesterday.

She will also speak at the annual meeting of Centrepole, the homelessness charity, and will attend a gala evening for the English National Ballet at St James's Palace. They are the first public engagements to be announced since her visit to Sydney nearly two weeks ago, during which she spoke at a fund-raising dinner for a heart research charity and visited a hospice. Her last public appearance in Britain was at the London Light-house centre for people with Aids and HIV.

The three organisations behind her engagements announced yesterday are among the six on which she decided to concentrate after dropping her patronage of many charities as she prepared for divorce. The leprosy meeting will be held on December 9 at the Wellcome Trust in Euston.

Fake doctor gave two injections to patient

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

A BOGUS doctor gave two injections to a disabled woman after calling at her house. The woman allowed herself to be injected in the arm by the visitor, who arrived on her doorstep on Tuesday, thinking that she was a doctor from her health centre in Faversham, Kent.

Kent Police said yesterday: "We would warn anyone who is calling out a doctor to check for identification. We can only assume that this woman was a bogus doctor. She administered two injections to the disabled woman, but she suffered no ill effects."

The incident is believed to be an example of "white coat syndrome", when people convince patients and staff that they are qualified professionals. This case is unusual, as the syndrome is usually restricted to hospitals.

Mike Berry, a forensic clinical psychologist, said: "Some people like the kick they get out of being a medic — the power and control." He suggested that the bogus doctor — a woman in her 30s, wearing a blue trenchcoat — could be mentally ill or have a personality disorder, especially if the injections involved drugs.

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DIAL 8-PHONE

Cheap roofing tiles 'threaten diversity of old England'

By Russell Jenkins

A CAMPAIGN was launched yesterday to protect the rich variety of England's traditional stone slate roofs. English Heritage gave a warning that cheap concrete and synthetic imports were driving the slate industry into crisis, with ancient skills in danger of dying out.

Over the centuries, locally quarried slates — from Yorkshire sandstone to the limestone villages of the Cotswolds and Dorset — had played a central role in creating distinct regions, the conservation body said. This "vernacular footprint" was being steadily rubbed out.

Sir Jocelyn Stevens, the English Heritage chairman, called on local authorities, planners, developers, owners and architects to join the crusade. Launching the *Roofs of England* campaign at the National Stone Centre in Wirksworth, Derbyshire, he said: "Stone slates are among the most beautiful of all roofing materials: a marvellous and understated legacy from the past that records the skills of generations of craftsmen."

Yet stone slates are vanishing before our eyes. Owners of historic buildings are having to rely on imports that often look vile and will only last half as long as the local stones they are replacing," he added. "Let's begin saying 'no' to the fake and bogus substitutes that seem such a bargain in the short term and turn out to be rotten and expensive alternatives in the long term."

The campaign, backed by a travelling exhibition, follows a year-long research project by English Heritage, Derbyshire County Council and the Peak District National Park that



A Shropshire example of regional slates

took the stone slate industry of the South Pennines as a model. Sue Macdonald, the project co-ordinator, said the homogeneity of many English villages and towns been destroyed. The rooftops of Bakewell, Derbyshire, for example, had ended up like a patchwork quilt of blue slates, red tiles and other alien imports.

Roofing slates have been used in England since Roman times and by the 19th century had become the standard, with local supplies of material and skills. The industry was on a small scale with each village using its local quarry for supplies. Sir Jocelyn said they determined the character of towns and villages, providing a sense of place.

"Like wine, stone is known by the name of the region from which it comes," he said. "Think of the Cotswolds, for example, and you immediately think of warmly textured golden limestone buildings, steeply pitched roofs and dormer windows. Think of Wirksworth and you immediately think of the local sand-

stone, the grey slates as they are called, which can be as large as 4ft long, dwarfing the tiny mopes, mumsfords, tants and becks, and all those other wonderfully named sizes of slates that are to be found from the Isle of Purbeck to the Yorkshire Dales."

Mass production and the creation of a national network of roads and railways led in the last century to the introduction of cheap industrial roof claddings, often from abroad, and the steady decline of the localised industry.

Sir Jocelyn criticised local planning authorities, building owners and architects for a laissez faire attitude to architectural salvage. Stripping some buildings to roof others had forced up the price of some slates, making them targets for thieves.

"Current demands for new stone slates can be met, not from making new scars on the hillsides but instead from reopening old quarries," he said.



Sir Stanley Matthews, left, and Lawton's Notts County team-mate Jack Sewell at the funeral yesterday

Hundreds gather to wish Lawton farewell

HUNDREDS of soccer fans gathered in Nottingham yesterday for the funeral of the former England centre forward Tommy Lawton, who died from pneumonia last week, aged 77.

His cortege paused outside the Notts County ground at Meadow Lane, where Lawton played and was later manager.

on its way to Bramcote Crematorium. His coffin was draped in a white flag with the three lions of England. It also carried one of his international caps, won in a match against Holland in the 1940s, and lent by a collector.

The Rev Clifford Wilton, who led the service, said that Lawton, who scored 22

times for England in 23 games, "will be remembered with pride. He was a man who brought honour to the game."

Earlier, Sir Stanley Matthews, his England colleague, called Lawton "the greatest ever centre forward. He was a wonderful man: modest, charming, with a wonderful sense of humour."

SATURDAY IN THE TIMES



THE MAXWELL INHERITANCE

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100 WINTER WINES

Jane MacQuitty picks the top 20 at under £5

THE DIRECTORY

Your guide to going out and staying in, with 7 days' TV and radio

Arson gang pumped petrol into science lab

By A Staff Reporter

A FIRE that swept through a forensic science laboratory containing evidence from hundreds of police investigations was the result of a "determined and prolonged" arson attack, police said yesterday.

Nine holes were drilled in the building at Wetherby, Yorkshire, and a garden pump was used to pour gallons of petrol inside. Police believe a firework was then thrown into the laboratory to start Monday night's blaze.

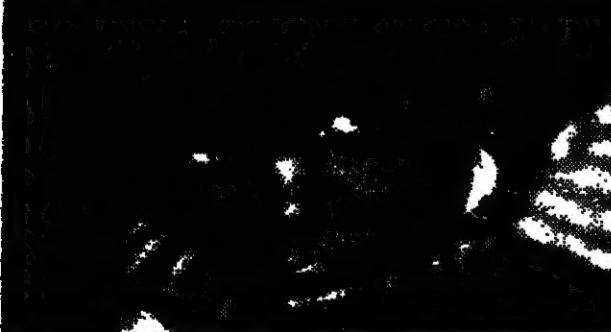
A tenth of the building, one of seven laboratories in the country run by the Home Office forensic science service, was damaged. The laboratory

analyses samples, including blood and DNA, from police forces in the North.

The Home Office said yesterday it was still assessing whether any criminal evidence was destroyed, although it expected the laboratory would return to normal working in a few days.

Detective Superintendent Brian Steele, of West Yorkshire Police, said: "Having had a look at the scene it is clear it was a determined and prolonged attack upon the premises." More than one person was involved, he added, but officers were keeping an open mind about a motive.

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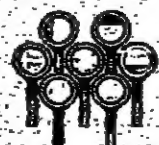
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Doctors should be free to make decisions on individual cases, says White Paper

Cost is no barrier to NHS treatment, pledges Dorrell

By JEREMY LAURANCE
HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

NO MEDICAL treatment should be ruled out by health authorities seeking to save money on tight NHS budgets, Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, said yesterday.

In a warning to NHS managers tempted to withdraw access to treatments such as tattoo removal or in vitro fertilisation on the NHS, Mr Dorrell said there was no justification for imposing blanket bans on treatments.

A White Paper published yesterday setting out the Government's aspirations for the NHS pledges that it will continue to provide a universal, free service funded from taxation.

The document, *A Service With Ambitions*, rejects the doom-mongers' view, championed by Sir Duncan Nichol, the former NHS chief executive, that the health service will be unable to meet the demands on it without extra sources

of funds. However, it also dismisses calls for national rationing of treatments, on the ground that clinical freedom must be preserved because there is always someone who may benefit.

Mr Dorrell said it was the task of politicians and NHS managers to establish priorities and to set the framework within which doctors worked. "What we can't do is seek to prescribe in advance individual decisions about individual patients."

In the case of in vitro fertilisation, whose availability on the NHS is severely restricted, he said that its low success rate had been one factor which determined the slow pace of its introduction into the NHS.

He added: "No health authority should have a blanket ban on in vitro fertilisation. There is guidance about the availability of particular treatments which still leaves clinicians free to argue for them for particular patients."

The White Paper's defence of the

health service was welcomed by medical organisations yesterday, but was attacked by Labour as a "pre-election stunt" which contained no proposals for legislation.

Philip Hunt, director of the National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts, said the NHS had to win public and political support for the changes that had to take place if the White Paper's ambitions were to be realised.

"We are having real problems in persuading the public that the centralisation of some services and the transfer of others to local settings will provide much better services. I'm very doubtful that the internal market is sufficient in itself to power such changes," he said.

Earlier, Mr Dorrell told the BBC Radio 4 Today programme that the Government had comprehensively won the argument over its NHS market reforms. He rejected opposition claims that the Government wants to privatise the service, saying: "If a Conservative Govern-

ment had wanted to privatise the NHS — it's been in power for 17 years — it might have started to do something about it."

"This paper sets out very clearly our commitment to continue to deliver high value, high quality health care for patients on the basis of their clinical need, without asking if they can afford to pay for it."

But Chris Smith, the Shadow Health Secretary, said: "One thing this White Paper simply doesn't do is address the real crisis that is facing the health service now — the people waiting on trolleys for accident and emergency service, the people having their operations cancelled, 11,500 of them in the past year, the fact that the health service over the past five years has employed 50,000 fewer nurses and 20,000 more managers."

Mr Smith described drawing up the White Paper as "an abuse of civil servants' time".



Stephen Dorrell yesterday: he promised high-quality care

Letters, page 21

Ombudsman attacks hospital where woman died after ten-hour wait

By JEREMY LAURANCE

A WOMAN left for ten hours in a hospital casualty department had a heart attack and died before a bed was found for her, the NHS ombudsman reports today.

The patient, who was waiting for treatment at the King George Hospital in Ilford, Essex, was not seen promptly by a doctor and received inadequate care from nurses, the

ombudsman, Sir William Reid, says. Details of the case, from among 95 investigated between April and September, are released the day after Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, published fictional examples of top-quality care in a White Paper on the NHS's future.

Entitled *A Service With Ambitions*, the White Paper cites nine examples of the ideal kind of care the public could expect from the

NHS in the next decade. The ombudsman's report provides a reminder of how far there is to go to meet that standard. Sir William's report reveals serious shortcomings in medical care and deficiencies in staffing levels, equipment and record keeping.

The woman was taken to the Ilford hospital at 4.40am and categorised as a "priority two" patient, meaning she should have

been seen by a doctor within an hour and found a bed within 90 minutes. The time she was seen by the doctor and the time of the decision to admit her were not recorded, but it was "clearly well in excess of the [hospital] trusts own standard," the report says. She was referred to the medical team at 7.50am and the next entry, at 2.20pm, recorded her cardiac arrest. The ombudsman says ten hours

"is far too long for any patient to have to wait in an A and E department... The care she received during that time was inadequate: nursing observations were not carried out and there was no call-bell to attract the attention of staff. The number and skills of staff were inadequate."

In a second complaint upheld by the ombudsman, concerning the same hospital, a man with breath-

ing difficulties collapsed and died after nurses failed to follow a doctor's instructions to set up an intravenous drip. Sir William criticised doctors at the hospital for failing to recognise that they were responsible for administering drugs.

Health Service Commissioner, *Selected Investigations Completed April to September 1996* (HMSO, £18.70).

Scientists warn of rise in skin cancer

By NICK NORTON, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

CASES of cancer and premature wrinkling of the skin are expected to rise sharply over the coming decades as the Earth's ozone layer thins, scientists said yesterday.

Researchers for the Stratospheric Ozone Review Group, which advises the Government on the impact of man-made pollution on the Earth's protective shield, believe that even if the layer recovers, cases of skin cancer will rise by 10 per cent.

It means an extra 8,000 cases by 2046 of one of the hardest cancers to diagnose as young children are exposed to more intense sunlight over their lifetimes. Along with a rise in cataracts and diseases such as herpes, scientists have for the first time calculated the likely impacts of higher ultraviolet light on wrinkles and other skin conditions. "Solar exposure causes skin photo-ageing, which is characterised by wrinkling, increased risk of

photosaging as a result of ozone layer depletion is likely to be similar to that for skin cancer," the scientists concluded.

The researchers believe that their estimates are "conservative". Dr Anne Webb, of the University of Manchester's Institute of Science and Technology and a member of the advisory team, said yesterday that estimates were based on existing forecasts on the recovery of the layer and an assumption that lifestyles would remain unchanged.

However, John Pyle, of Cambridge University, who is chairman of the advisory group, said there was evidence that the recovery of the ozone layer might be far less rapid than had previously been supposed.

The researchers now believe that damage to the ozone layer will continue to thin it up to 2010. Full recovery is now unlikely until 2050.

"It would be a real triumph for the thousands of scientists working in British laboratories if this disease no longer posed a significant health risk for the elderly." Such an achievement would save not only millions of pounds for the NHS but also suffering for millions of people.

The disease can be detected by X-ray absorption scanning, but no more than about 1 per cent of women at risk are ever scanned. Britain has a smaller proportion of bone-scanners than many other countries. Once detected, the disease can be treated in a variety of ways. Hormone replacement therapy, developed to treat menopausal symptoms, can slow or halt bone loss. Other types of drug are either already available or in development.

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Police will fight plan to register Masons

BRITAIN'S biggest police organisation is fighting plans by chief constables to ask officers to declare whether they are Freemasons or members of other secret groups, such as Opus Dei.

Yesterday the Police Federation, which represents 120,000 junior officers, accused chief constables of planning an "unwarranted interference" with the private lives of police officers. It said: "Those in command of Britain's police forces appear more concerned to portray a politically correct image than they are to safeguard the rights of police in a free society."

Last month the Association of Chief Police Officers called on all officers who were Freemasons to register their involvement and ease public concern about the influence of the Masons. The chief constables also urged officers to consider giving up their membership and pledged to lobby the Government to create a compulsory register.

Soon after the announcement, the leader of the Police Superintendents' Association expressed concern. All sections of the police service are due to discuss the plans and may combine to oppose them.

Three years ago delegates at the federation's annual conference rejected proposals for a voluntary register. Fred Broughton, the current chairman of the federation, is not a Freemason, but the organisation's officials include officers who are. The federation said officers had always accepted that they had to avoid anything in their private lives which might affect their impartiality. All recruits take an oath pledging their services "without fear or favour".

The association claimed that the chief constables were impugning that guarantee, and acting on very slender evidence. Although there had been rumours about bias in the police caused by Freemasonry, there was no evidence to support it.

Hands-off rule - even on the dancefloor - keeps mixed ships on even keel

Wrens back a touch of naval equality

FROM MICHAEL EVANS ON HMS INVINCIBLE IN THE GULF

THE men and women on HMS Invincible do not touch each other even at dances on board ship. The "no touching rule" applies as much to the dancefloor as it does to the mess halls, the wardroom and the darkened atmosphere of the operations room.

The decision to send Wrens to sea may be an issue at home on the few occasions when "chick punky" courts martial are held. But on distant shores, that has about all. Wrens living and working in a ship's 1,000 men, sea-going women - whether in white overalls or starched white shorts and skirts - shudder at the thought of seeing couples walking around the ship holding hands.

One young Wren said: "That would be really sleazy. When we're alongside (ashore), that's different, but on board ship we all stick to the rules." Another said: "We're

living in a man's world and we have to be one of the lads, not girly girls. Of course, they realise we're not guys, but we wait until we go alongside. When we're back on board we have to be just friends."

The commonsense attitude of the Wrens on Invincible is a vote of confidence in the decision to favour mixed-sex ships which the Navy made in 1993, despite recent criticism and salacious allegations, subsequently rejected, at an industrial tribunal concerning a claim of touching on HMS Brazen. There are now more than 700 women on 41 warships and, as far as the officers are concerned, having a mixed crew is no longer an issue, although many of the older men admit that they still open doors for the women, of whatever rank.

Wrens who were happy to give their names were, without exception, content with the no-touching rule and appeared interested only in proving they were as good as their male colleagues at work and better at retaliatory banter. "You have to give as good as you get," Wren Operator/Maintainer Sarah Gill, 21, said.

Wren Air Engineering Mechanic Liz Ritchie, 21, is leaving the Royal Navy in March 1998, having joined in October 1992, but that is because she has decided she does not want to go to sea for the next 20 years. Men make similar decisions.

Wren Ritchie, who comes from Glasgow and has a boyfriend in the Navy on



Air Engineering Mechanic Liz Ritchie at work. "I enjoy it, but you have to stand up for yourself," she said

another ship, admitted that being at sea - this is her first tour - was a big shock. However, she said: "I enjoy it. I know some of the blokes don't like women at sea and we have to accept some hassles, but you have to stand up for yourself."

Wren Gill, who works with four men maintaining communications equipment, was equally adamant about keeping relationships strictly professional. She said: "You can't have people walking around holding hands."

Her male colleagues clearly enjoy her company. "She keeps us in line," Petty Officer Weapons Engineer Mechanic David Jacob, 33, said.

The most senior officer on board, Rear-Admiral Alan West, Commander United Kingdom Task Group, is the man who was originally responsible for recommending the Wrens-at-sea policy after a six-month study as a captain in 1989. The Navy Board went further and opened all ships to women. "I think they were right," he said, although he was told by one senior officer that the first Wren to become pregnant at sea would be his fault.

Sailor is cleared of assault after kisses in the West Indies

BY MICHAEL EVANS

THE case against a sailor charged with indecently assaulting a Wren on board a Royal Navy frigate was dropped yesterday after the court-martial prosecution offered no further evidence.

During legal arguments before the hearing began, it was revealed

that the Wren had made previous allegations of sexual assault. They included two allegations of rape that led to no court action and one of sexual assault which resulted in a court martial that collapsed.

Weapon Engineering Mechanic Darren Garnsworthy, 22, now based at HMS Drake in Plymouth, had been accused of kissing a 22-year-old

Wren aboard HMS Norfolk and forcing her to the deck before committing an indecent act. He was found not guilty after Lieutenant-Commander John Flanagan, for the prosecution, said that, after new information, he was offering no further evidence. No details of the information were given.

It emerged during the case that Wren aboard HMS Norfolk and forcing her to the deck before committing an indecent act. He was found not guilty after Lieutenant-Commander John Flanagan, for the prosecution, said that, after new information, he was offering no further evidence. No details of the information were given.

Rear-Admiral James Perowne, Flag Officer Submarines at Northwood, west London, who was captain of HMS Norfolk at the time, had been questioned over a delay in investigating the Wren's allegation. Nicholas Lewin, for the defence, said there had been an investigation into why the Navy's Special Investigations Branch was not called in at the time.

The assault was alleged to have happened in October 1994 while the frigate was in the West Indies, acting as a guardship.

WEM Garnsworthy said there had been kissing for a couple of seconds, but nothing more. Mr Lewin said the sailor had been given a "dressing down" for breaching the no-touching rule.

Photo call in hunt for sex attacker

Police hunting a sex attacker who assaulted an 11-year-old schoolboy are asking hundreds of men on two housing estates to allow their photographs to be taken to eliminate them from the search. The boy was grabbed from outside his home on the George Lambton estate in Newmarket last September, taken to playing fields and attacked. Ten detectives are now visiting 2,000 homes in the area.

Singular malt

A 1940 bottle of malt whisky has been sold for £1,900 - more than three times the price expected - at Christie's six-monthly whisky sale in Glasgow. The Strathisla malt went to an unnamed foreign buyer. The sale raised £63,842.

Bus hijacked

A bus driver was forced to drive 110 miles to Scotland after a man flagged down an empty Cleveland Transit bus in Stockton-on-Tees. The bus ran out of fuel on the A1 at Grants-house, Borders, at 2.30am and the hijacker ran off.

Poster dispute

A poster of the Virgin Mary, advertising the Virgin records stores, has been condemned as blasphemous by Roman Catholic organisations in Ireland. The posters show a woman in a white veil and a blue T-shirt with "Virgin" across her chest.

Rail miles offer

Eurostar, which runs Channel Tunnel services to Paris and Brussels from London, announced a form of "rail miles" to reward all customers who buy a return ticket or two single tickets on its first and business-class services.

Mercury display

Freddie Mercury's life story will be told in photographs at a free public exhibition at the Royal Albert Hall later this month to mark the fifth anniversary of his death. The lead singer of Queen died in 1991 after contracting Aids.

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Police will fight plan to register Masons

By STEWART TENDLER
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

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FROM MICHAEL EVANS ON HMS INVINCIBLE IN THE GULF

THE men and women on HMS *Invincible* do not touch each other even at dances on board ship. The "no touching rule" applies as much to the dancefloor as it does to the mess halls, the wardroom and the darkened atmosphere of the operations room.

The decision to send Wrens to sea may be an issue at home on the few occasions when "hanky-panky" courts martial hit the headlines. But on an aircraft carrier that has about 110 Wrens living and working with nearly 1,000 men, the young women - whether in dirty blue overalls or starched white shorts and shirts - shudder at the thought of seeing couples walking around the ship holding hands.

One young Wren said: "That would be really sleazy. When we're alongside jashore, that's different, but on board ship we all stick to the rules." Another said: "We're

living in a man's world and we have to be one of the lads, not girly girls. Of course, they realise we're not guys, but we wait until we go alongside. When we're back on board we have to be just friends."

The commonsense attitude of the Wrens on *Invincible* is a vote of confidence in the decision in favour of mixed-sex ships which the Navy made in 1990, despite recent criticism and salacious allegations, subsequently rejected, at an industrial tribunal concerning a claim of touching on HMS *Brazen*. There are now more than 700 women on 41 warships and, as far as the officers are concerned, having a mixed crew is no longer an issue, although many of the older men admit that they still open doors for the women, of whatever rank.

Wrens who were happy to give their names were, without exception, content with the no-touching rule and appeared interested only in proving they were as good as their male colleagues at work and better at retaliatory banter. "You have to give as good as you get," Wren Operator/Maintainer Sarah Gill, 20, said.

Wren Air Engineer Mechanic Liz Ritchie, 21, is leaving the Royal Navy in March 1998, having joined in October 1992, but that is because she has decided she does not want to go to sea for the next 20 years. Men make similar decisions.

Wren Ritchie, who comes from Glasgow and has a boyfriend in the Navy on



Air Engineering Mechanic Liz Ritchie at work. "I enjoy it, but you have to stand up for yourself," she said

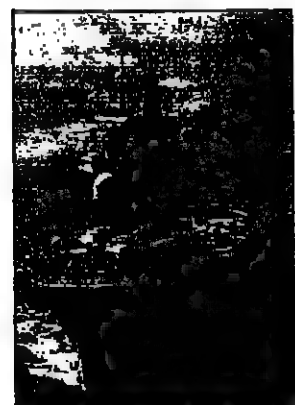
another ship, admitted that being at sea - this is her first tour - was a big shock. However, she said: "I enjoy it. I know some of the blokes don't like women at sea and we have to accept some hassles, but you have to stand up for yourself."

four men maintaining communications equipment, was equally adamant about keeping relationships strictly professional. She said: "You can't have people walking around holding hands."

Her male colleagues clearly enjoy her company. "She keeps us in line," Petty Officer Weapons Engineer Mechanic David Jacob, 33, said.

The most senior officer on board - Rear-Admiral Allan West, Commander United Kingdom Task Group, is the man who was originally responsible for recommending the Wrens-at-sea policy after a six-month study as a captain in 1989. The Navy Board went further and opened all ships to women. "I think they were right," he said, although he was told by one senior officer that the first Wren to become pregnant at sea would be his fault.

American example, page 21



HMS *Invincible*: 110 women and 1,000 men

Sailor is cleared of assault after kisses in the West Indies

By MICHAEL EVANS

THE case against a sailor charged with indecently assaulting a Wren on board a Royal Navy frigate was dropped yesterday after the court-martial prosecution offered no further evidence.

During legal arguments before the hearing began, it was revealed

that the Wren had made previous allegations of sexual assault. They included two allegations of rape that led to no court action and one of sexual assault which resulted in a court martial that collapsed.

Weapons Engineering Mechanic Darren Garnsworthy, 22, now based at HMS *Drake* in Plymouth, had been accused of kissing a 22-year-old

Wren aboard HMS *Norfolk* and forcing her to the deck before committing an indecent act. He was found not guilty after Lieutenant-Commander John Flanagan, for the prosecution, said that, after new information, he was offering no further evidence. No details of the information were given.

It emerged during the case that

Rear-Admiral James Perrowe, Flag Officer Submarines at Northwood, west London, who was captain of HMS *Norfolk* at the time, had been questioned over a delay in investigating the Wren's allegation. Nicholas Lewin, for the defence, said there had been an investigation into why the Navy's Special Investigations Branch was not called in at the time.

The assault was alleged to have happened in October 1994 while the frigate was in the West Indies, acting as a guardship.

Wren Garnsworthy said there had been kissing for a couple of seconds, but nothing more. Mr Lewin said the sailor had been given a "dressing down" for breaching the no-touching rule.

Photo call in hunt for sex attacker

Police hunting a sex attacker who assaulted an 11-year-old schoolboy - are asking hundreds of men on two housing estates to allow their photographs to be taken to eliminate them from the search. The boy was grabbed from outside his home on the George Lambton estate in Newmarket last September, taken to playing fields and attacked. Ten detectives are now visiting 2,000 homes in the area.

Singular malt

A 1940 bottle of malt whisky has been sold for £1,900 - more than three times the price expected - at Christie's six-monthly whisky sale in Glasgow. The Strathisla malt went to an unnamed foreign buyer. The sale raised £63,842.

Bus hijacked

A bus driver was forced to drive 110 miles to Scotland after a man flagged down an empty Cleveland Transit bus in Stockton-on-Tees. The bus ran out of fuel on the A1 at Grants-house, Borders, at 2.30am and the hijacker ran off.

Poster dispute

A poster of the Virgin Mary, advertising the Virgin records stores, has been condemned as blasphemous by Roman Catholic organisations in Ireland. The posters show a woman in a white veil and a blue T-shirt with "Virgin" across her chest.

Rail miles offer

Eurostar, which runs Channel Tunnel services to Paris and Brussels from London, announced a form of "rail miles" to reward all customers who buy a return ticket or two single tickets on its first and business-class services.

Mercury display

Freddie Mercury's life story will be told in photographs at a free public exhibition at the Royal Albert Hall later this month to mark the fifth anniversary of his death. The lead singer of Queen died in 1991 after contracting Aids.

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Commons dissent shows no sign of becoming a habit

At least one in four Tory backbenchers refused to support the Government on a three-line whip on Tuesday over the Maastricht Bill. Apart from the Maastricht Bill, this was one of the largest rebellions of the Parliament. The mood on the Tory benches is often described as unusually fractious and rebellious. But that is not so. The highly publicised Euro-revolts since 1992 have exaggerated the underlying level of dissent, according to a new research paper, *Conservative MPs Revolting?*, by Philip Cowley and Philip Norton of the Centre for Legislative Studies at Hull University. From his eyrie round the corner from the library where Philip Larkin mused, Professor Norton has become the leading analyst of parliamentary dissent.

His researches have shown how the number and scale of rebellions by government backbenchers increased sharply during the 1970s — with dissenting votes in a fifth of divisions. There has been a lengthy academic debate about how far this reflected factors particular to the time (Edward Heath's leadership style, then the strains of continual economic crisis) or an underlying change in MPs' behaviour (with more independent minded, career politicians). In any event, the power of the whips was shown to have been less than believed and dissenters were not punished. Some American political scientists eagerly, and prematurely, celebrated the rise of Parliament.

The Cowley-Norton paper shows that the 1970s were not an aberration and did mark a change in attitudes, but rebelliousness has not increased or become a habit since then. Although MPs have been more prepared to defy their whips than before 1970, the scale and frequency of revolts have depended on the particular issues involved. In the three Parliaments of the Thatcher era, the number of divisions with dissenting votes was between 13 and 17 per cent, that is less than during the 1970s but much higher than the 1 to 2 per cent of the 1950s. Since 1992, rebellions have occurred in

14 per cent of divisions, probably inhibited in part because of the smallness of the Tory majority. Moreover, a third of the dissenters rebelled only once, and a further third fewer than ten times. Nearly two-thirds of the revolts involved fewer than ten MPs.

Two-fifths of the revolts in the current Parliament have been over Europe. All but four of the 39 rebellions involving more than 20 Tory MPs were over Maastricht. Of course, Europe has been highly divisive and damaging for the Tories since 1992, so it can hardly be brushed aside. But on non-European issues, the revolts were generally small scale. So the Major Government has had little trouble enacting most of its core economic and social programmes, such as rail privatisation. The key exceptions were the defeat in December 1994 over the second stage of VAT rise on domestic fuel and the rebellion in 1993 over Sunday trading. This was like Tuesday's revolt on the guns Bill: both were outside the main party battle. On some similar issues, and on parts of the shops Bill, there have been unwhipped votes — which has reduced the public impact of dissent.

Of course John Major, a former whip, has been very sensitive to backbench opinion — too sensitive in the view of some of his critics — and has manoeuvred to avoid defeat and to minimise revolts. Policy has been amended and concessions offered, as on Tuesday over compensation for gun owners. At the extreme, legislation has been dropped, notably Royal Mail privatisation. But there has been less room to manoeuvre to modify proposals over Europe, and the protagonists here have been harder to placate. Overall, despite the deep Tory divisions over Europe, there has not been a collapse of party discipline. As Cowley and Norton argue, Mr Major "managed Parliament rather well".

PETER RIDDELL

Smith's widow promoted

THE widow of the late Labour leader John Smith, Baroness Smith of Gilmorhill, has been appointed to the party's front bench in the Lords as spokeswoman for tourism.

In Labour's last reshuffle before the election, Baroness

Smith of Gilmorhill will take up the new post of spokeswoman on women's issues. Lord Ewing, who clashed with the leadership over plans for devolution in Scotland, leaves the front bench "by mutual agreement".

Why Does Your Memory Fail You?

A WORLD-FAMOUS memory expert, who has trained industrialists, trades unionists, businessmen, professional men, salesmen, housewives and students to improve their memories, once said:

"Many people are embarrassed by a poor memory, and find difficulty in concentrating; whilst others realise that they lose business, academic and social opportunities not only because they cannot remember accurately everything they see, hear or read, but also because they cannot think or express their thoughts clearly, logically and concisely. Some seek advice, but many do not, mainly because they believe their memories cannot be improved."

Simple Technique

And yet, he went on to explain, he has devised a simple technique which can improve even the poorest memory. What's more, it can even work like magic to give you added poise, self-confidence and greater personal effectiveness. Everyone owes it to himself to find out more about this method.

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Forget names, faces?

concentration to a remarkable degree. For example, you need never forget another appointment — ever! You could learn names, faces, facts, figures and foreign languages faster than you ever thought possible. You may be able to imprint whole books on your memory after a single reading. You could be more successful in your studies and examinations. At parties and dinners you may never again be at a loss for appropriate words or entertaining stories. In fact, you could even be more poised and self-confident in everything you say and do.

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Backbench Tories vent beef ban anger on Hogg

By JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Government faced strong protests from Tory MPs last night after Douglas Hogg admitted that there was little prospect of the European ban on British beef being lifted.

The Agriculture Secretary rejected repeated Tory and Ulster Unionist demands for the Government to introduce a new cattle cull to help to bring about a lifting of the ban. An "accelerated" cull of 128,000 dairy cattle most at risk from BSE was agreed by John Major and other European leaders at the Florence summit in June as a necessary precondition for a lifting of the ban. However, Mr Hogg said yesterday that European countries faced such internal opposition to British beef from consumers and agriculture industries that it was unlikely to lift the ban if the cull went ahead.

"We are not going to get from the member states an absolute guaranteed timetable leading to dates when the ban will be lifted," Mr Hogg said during a Labour-initiated debate on the BSE crisis. "We aren't going to get that and I am not going to pretend that we are because if I did I would be deceiving the House."

He added that the most that

EU countries would even consider was a partial lifting of the ban on some specific BSE-free herds.

However, many Tory MPs, including the former Cabinet minister Tom King, said it was now time to reconsider introducing the cull. Mr King opposed the cull last July but last night said: "Now we should seriously address the issue and address it seriously with the Commission."

Sir Patrick Cormack (C, Staffordshire S) asked why Mr Hogg could not get a commitment from the European Commission that the ban would be lifted if the cull were introduced.

John Greenway (C, Ryedale) said: "There is growing support among farmers to go ahead with the cull so we hold to our side of the bargain. Surely it would be possible to get agreement with Franz Fischler [the European Agriculture Commissioner] to find a way of resolving this conundrum that unless we have the cull, we will not get the ban lifted."

Bill Cash (C, Stafford) accused Mr Hogg of using "weasel words". He said that the Government could get an absolute guarantee from Europe to lift the ban if Britain

fulfilled its side of the Florence agreement. "If not, there will be serious trouble from this side of the House."

Sir Michael Spicer (C, Worcestershire S) said Mr Hogg was suggesting that Britain would get nothing in return for abiding by the Florence agreement. "Is it not time that we started to consider disruption again?" he asked, suggesting a "double whammy" with disruption over the 48-hour week.

Mr Hogg also faced criticism from Ulster MPs after he acknowledged that he had not yet submitted "detailed working papers" to try to secure a lifting of the ban for certified BSE-free herds, fed mainly on grass. This would have most impact in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The Rev Ian Paisley, the Democratic Unionist leader, urged ministers to promise that they would submit detailed working papers and Roy Beggs (UUP, Antrim E) asked: "Why have these papers not been completed and forwarded for consideration?"

Mr Hogg said that discussions were taking place with the Commission but no formal proposal had been laid down. He also faced fierce criticism from Tory MPs during an earlier debate after he again rejected cross-party pleas for compensation for the cattle head de-boning industry, which has been put out of business by the BSE controls.



compensate someone who has been made bankrupt by government edict?"

Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, attacked the Government for failing to reach its October and November targets for a lifting of the beef ban. He agreed that the ban should be lifted but added: "The Government has done too little too late."

IN PARLIAMENT

TODAY in the Commons: questions to Northern Ireland ministers and the Prime Minister; debate on Hong Kong; backbench debate on road transport development. In the Lords: City of Edinburgh Council Order Confirmation Bill, report; Edinburgh Merchant Company Order Confirmation Bill, report; Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill, report; The (Amendment) Bill, second reading; debate on Sports Council decision to exclude angling from sports designated with enhanced status.

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White House aides fear ruin at hands of the 'ethics virus'

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

FORGET notions of serving America and the adrenalin of working in the White House. Recruits to the new Clinton Administration should brace themselves to be bankrupted by legal bills running into hundreds of thousands of dollars from defending themselves in special investigations.

"I would advise anyone who comes into my job to make sure you have a lawyer on retainer from the day you walk in," says George Stephanopoulos, President Clinton's senior adviser, who has announced that he is leaving his post.

According to an extensive investigation in the December issue of *Vanity Fair*, Mr. Stephanopoulos has run up \$70,000 (£45,000) in legal bills from responding to a series of subpoenas, although he has not been charged with any wrongdoing. Stan Brand, his lawyer, warns that his bills could double if Mr. Stephanopoulos is subpoenaed during further investigations of the Clinton Administration.

Republicans as well as Democrats are targets of what Mr. Brand calls "the ethics virus"—special investigations by the Office of Government Ethics, congressional committees or independent prosecu-

tors. They may also feel called upon to defend themselves against charges of criminal behaviour made in the press under America's famously liberal libel laws.

Since Watergate, both parties have seen special investigations as powerful tools to harass their opponents, if not unseat them. Although the inquiries may be formally independent, they are frequently triggered by political accusations.

In the past two decades, 17 independent counsels have spent \$114 million investigating breaches of ethics. New legislation, passed by Mr. Clinton under Republican pressure, gave independent counsels even greater powers. Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House, who has hurled many charges of ethical breaches against the Democrats, is himself under investigation on the same grounds.

The Clintons reportedly have racked up \$2.4 million in legal bills, mainly on the Whitewater charges. They are believed still to owe more than half of the total.

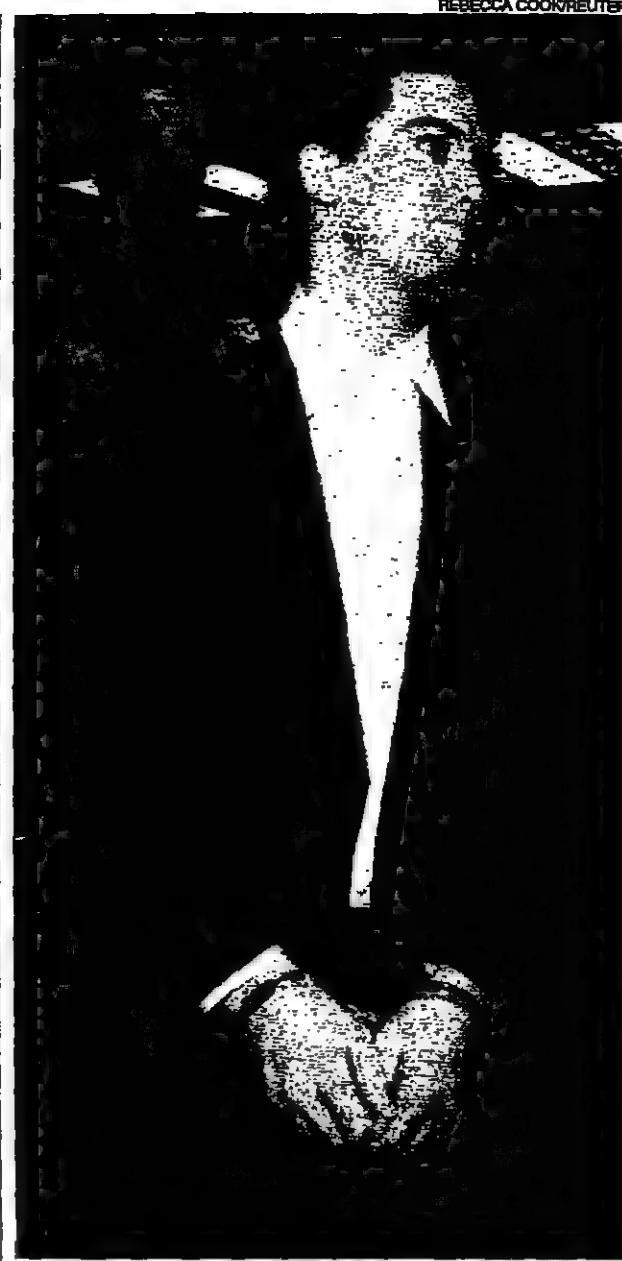
It is the second tier of advisers, particularly those in specially-created posts, who are especially vulnerable. They can be summoned—and have personal papers confis-

cated—to assist investigations into their superiors' actions. Junior aides' salaries are typically between \$100,000 and \$150,000 a year; legal bills can quickly run to double that figure. Even if they are charged with nothing initially, they run the risk that the hearings may later charge them with perjury.

Josh Steiner, a 28-year-old Treasury aide investigated by the Office of Government Ethics, was threatened with a perjury charge during the Whitewater hearings. He was cleared, but not until his diary and personal letters had been published. Mr. Steiner must be thankful that he picked no more embarrassing nickname for his lover than "Sweetpea".

New recruits are now under legal orders not to keep notes or personal diaries because they may be subpoenaed. Mr. Stephanopoulos advises future White House recruits to remember that "every word you ever say at any meeting to anyone at any time could come back to haunt you".

Mr. Stephanopoulos said he tried to shrug off the risk of continual legal conflict as an occupational hazard. "I always treat it like it is happening to somebody else," he told *Vanity Fair*. "To a fictional character named George."



Jonathan Schmitz, 26, leaves court in Pontiac, Michigan, after being convicted of second degree murder for killing a homosexual who told a talk show of a crush for him. The show pushed him over the edge, a jury decided.

US builds laser with the power to kill missiles

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

THE US Air Force has ordered a military version of the jumbo jet equipped with a laser in its nose to shoot down enemy missiles hundreds of miles away. The technology is said to be "as revolutionary as the invention of gunpowder".

The innovation could herald a new era of military hardware evocative of Hollywood science fiction films. Scientists have been secretly working on the laser jet for more than a decade, following the "Star Wars" initiative.

If all goes according to plan, revamped Boeing 747s will have the capacity to destroy missiles such as the Scuds which Iraq used in the Gulf War. The lasers are said to be powerful enough to hit targets 250 miles away.

The plane will fly above 40,000ft and, it is claimed, would hit enemy rockets at the "booster" stage, the first 40 to 100 seconds of flight. Detection of missile launches will be conducted by on-board "seekers" and with the help of American satellites.

In development, the laser attack jet was called the YAL-1A, or Attack Laser Aircraft. Senior officers said that they hope to have it in action within six years and the Pentagon has made a provisional order for seven. They will be based at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico but may be deployed abroad. In moments of international tension, it is likely that relay teams of the jets would be kept in the air

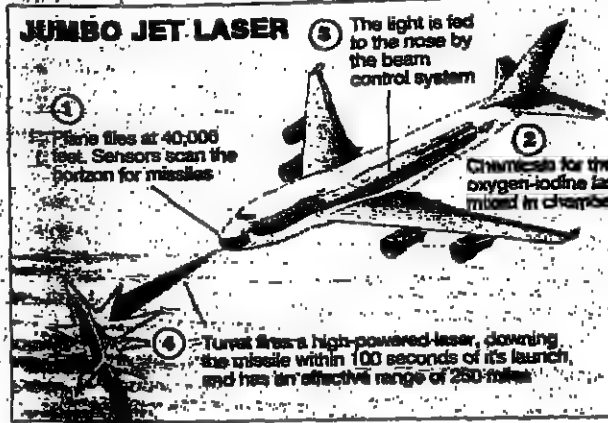
around the clock. The cost of the planes, which have a forecast lifespan of 20 years, could be \$5 billion (more than £3 billion). However, the project may prove vulnerable to budget cuts and the makers have been given a schedule of tests and demonstrations to keep before the full order is confirmed. The first live demonstration could be made in 2002.

General Ronald Fogleman, Chief of Staff of the US Air Force, said: "This is truly a revolutionary system."

A USAF fact-sheet claimed: "If the enemy were to launch a theatre ballistic missile, the Attack Laser would detect the booster while it is still powered and passing through the clouds. The laser would then destroy the missile, with the resulting debris falling back on enemy territory." Debris could include nuclear

or chemical warheads. General King, head of Boeing's Defence and Space Group, said: "We consider it an honour to be given the responsibility of bringing this technology to an operational level." Boeing was the Pentagon contract in association with Lockheed Martin and TRW Inc. A rival bid, which was not successful, was led by Rockwell International and the carmaker General Motors.

Another Boeing executive, Paul Shennan, told Business Wire news agency: "The media has reported increasing numbers of missiles in the arsenals of countries unfriendly to the United States. Today more than 20 countries including Iraq, Iran and North Korea have more than 10,000 theatre ballistic missiles in their arsenals. Many are also developing chemical, biological or nuclear warheads."



Clinton gives up key budget battle

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S steady march to the Right continued yesterday after he signalled a willingness to co-operate with Republicans and dropped his opposition to a constitutional amendment to balance the federal budget.

Although stopping just short of endorsing an amendment he once described as a "gimmick", Mr. Clinton was said by White House aides to have bowed to an inevitable political reality after last week's congressional elections gave Republicans more power in the Senate.

Despite opposition from the President, the measure passed the House last year but failed in the Senate by a single vote. After the Republican gain of two Senate seats last week both sides are convinced that the measure would now win the two-thirds majority needed in Congress next year before being sent to the individual states for ratification.

"If it sets a framework and says that in the 21st century, in the economy we're going to be

living in, other things being equal, we ought always to be balancing our books, I agree with that," Mr. Clinton said after meeting the congressional leadership, including Trent Lott, the Senate majority leader, and Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker.

The President gave a warning that the constitutional amendment, a pillar of the Republican's *Contract with America* two years ago, must include a provision to avoid the balanced budget requirement if the country's economy should slide into recession. "You don't want to wind up with a Congress someday in a recession raising taxes or throwing unemployed people off healthcare," he said.

While Republicans offered an equally ambiguous display of unity, it has become clear that the path towards reconciliation between the two sides is still peppered with obstacles after an election campaign in which Democrats tried to depict their opponents as extremist and uncaring.

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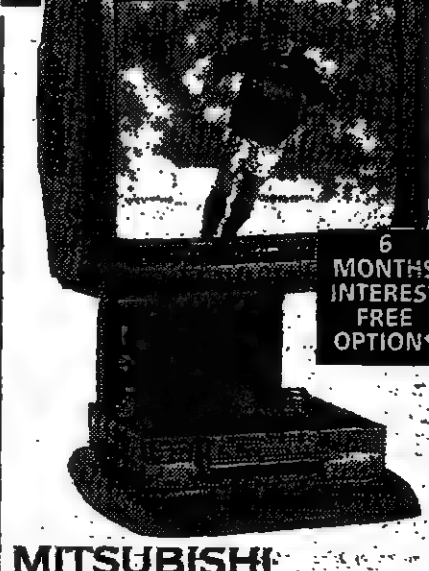
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†The rates quoted are for new customers. Existing customers may be eligible for a different rate. Rates are correct as at 07/11/96.

‡The rates quoted are for new customers. Existing customers may be eligible for a different rate. Rates are correct as at 07/11/96.

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TRAVEL

The 'undiscovered' countries aim to get on the tourist map
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When mounting an opera is more like going to war
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Unemployment is working for new talent in fencing
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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 14 1996

Revolt over pension mis-selling delays

By MARIANNE CURRIE

THREE years after a review into the mis-selling of personal pensions began, only 1 per cent of the 500,000 most urgent cases have been offered compensation, it emerged yesterday.

Consumer groups, including some of the country's largest trade unions, expressed alarm at the delay after figures were published for the first time showing that only 6,227 people had been offered financial redress.

They accused pension providers and the trustees of occupational pension schemes of dragging their feet, and called for the offenders to be named and disciplined.

The figures, from the Personal Investment Authority, were published at the same time as the City's most senior watchdog, the Securities and Investment Board (SIB), unveiled plans to speed up the compensation process.

An estimated 1.5 million people may have been persuaded to leave their lucrative employers' occupational schemes and contribute to a personal pension instead. Much of the mis-selling dates to the late 1980s, and some of the worst-affected were nurses, teachers and miners.

SIB yesterday described the progress of the review as "unacceptably slow" and said it had issued 10,000 letters to pension providers. Priority cases were due to have been reviewed by the end of this year, but just 5 per cent — a total of 24,237 cases — have been completed, and only 149,918 in compensation has been offered. The total compensation and costs bill could run into billions.

SIB said occupational schemes had found it impossible to cope with the number of highly-detailed inquiries from

insurance firms and financial advisers and as a result it was reducing the number of questions an occupational scheme must answer from 230 to 8.

The new guidance also reduces the number of inquiries firms have to make and simplifies calculations. However, concern has been raised that consumers may receive less in compensation under the new system.

Sir Andrew Large, chairman of the SIB, said all those firms "with a sense of responsibility" would now be able to carry out most of their case reviews without further delays. Those who persisted in "dragging their feet" risked the possibility of regulatory action. He said: "Investors who were mis-sold personal pensions and suffered loss are entitled to redress and we are determined they will get it."

Confidential PIA documents leaked two weeks ago named Prudential, the UK's largest life insurance company, as the worst offender in dealing with the review.

The Trades Union Congress expressed concern that no new deadlines were announced. SIB said regulatory bodies such as the PIA would be setting "realistic new target dates" once firms had time to digest the guidance.

Jonathan Segal, TUC pension officer, said: "New deadlines should be set and those companies who fail to meet them should face discipline." The Association of British Insurers said insurance firms were determined to complete the review as quickly as possible and compensate people where this was due. Figures showing progress of the review will now be published every three months.

Pennington, page 29



Sir Andrew Large, SIB chairman, is determined mis-selling victims will be repaid quicker

East Midlands agrees £1.3bn Dominion bid

By OLIVER AUGUST

EAST Midlands Electricity yesterday agreed to a £1.3 billion takeover by Dominion Resources, the US energy group. In overnight negotiations Dominion had increased its bid from 608p per share to 670p.

A third of the regional electricity companies in England and Wales are now set to be in American hands.

Dominion said it did not expect a referral to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. But market-makers remained sceptical and East Midlands shares closed at 625.5p, up 14.5p, well below the 670p offer.

Meanwhile board members from both companies began negotiations with Stephen Littlechild, the industry regulator.

Sir Nigel Rudd, the East Midlands chairman, said: "We are recommending Dominion Resources' offer because it represents fair value for an excellent business, which has successfully differentiated itself from the sector. As a management team we have always put shareholders' and customers' interests at the top of our agenda."

The 670p offer represents a 25 per cent premium on the company's closing share price of 537.5p on November 5, the day before Dominion announced it was considering making a bid.

Thomas Capps, chairman

and chief executive of the US group, said: "We have been impressed by East Midlands Electricity management's record and we look forward to working with them to continue the development of the company."

Dominion supplies the US state of Virginia with energy as well as selected regions in South America. It also has a financial services division which is primarily concerned with mortgage lending.

East Midlands Electricity will be the fourth Rec to be taken over by an American company and leaves just three of the 12 companies, privatised in 1990, either independent or not facing a bid. The US-owned total could rise to five if a separate hostile bid by CE Electric for Northern Electric is successful.

John Batten, Labour's Shadow Energy and Industry Minister, said 9.3 million households would be buying their electricity from American-owned companies if the Northern takeover went through.

He said: "Whilst Labour has no opposition to overseas takeovers it is absolutely vital that these industries do not move beyond the reach of the regulator. US-owned companies must face regulation on a par with UK-owned companies."

Pennington, page 29
Shake-up urged, page 32

GOING, GOING, GONE

Price	Value	Status
£1.3bn	£1.3bn	£1.3bn bid from Dominion Resources
£1.18bn	£1.18bn	Yet to receive bid
£1.18bn	£1.18bn	Survived Tinsdale bid, but CE bids
£1.18bn	£1.18bn	Bid from National Power blocked
£1.18bn	£1.18bn	Taken over by Central and South West
£1.18bn	£1.18bn	Now part of Hyder with Welsh Water
£1.18bn	£1.18bn	Now part of Hanson
£1.18bn	£1.18bn	Agreed bid from Southern of Atlanta
£1.18bn	£1.18bn	Taken over by Avon Energy
£1.18bn	£1.18bn	Taken over by ScottishPower
£1.18bn	£1.18bn	Taken over by North West Water

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	3826.9	(-7.4)
FTSE All share	1936.77	(-2.02)
Nikkei	20795.44	(-228.99)
New York	8247.83	(-19.01)
Dow Jones	6485.14	(-0.84)
S&P Composite	728.82	(-0.84)

US RATE

Federal Funds	5.75%	(5.75%)
Long Bond	100%	(100%)
Yield	6.48%	(6.48%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth Interbank	8.75%	(8.75%)
Life long gilt	108%	(108%)
Libor (Dec)	108%	(108%)

STERLING

New York	1.8880	(1.8880)
London	1.8832	(1.8832)
DM	2.4809	(2.4809)
FF	8.4214	(8.4214)
Sfr	2.0885	(2.0885)
Yen	184.53	(184.53)
£ index	91.3	(91.3)

DOLLAR

London	1.8886	(1.8886)
DM	2.4809	(2.4809)
FF	8.4214	(8.4214)
Sfr	2.0885	(2.0885)
Yen	184.53	(184.53)
£ index	91.3	(91.3)

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NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Jan)	\$22.95	(\$22.50)
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GOLD

London close	\$394.16	(\$391.75)
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* denotes midday trading price

Big picture

Westinghouse Electric unveiled one of America's largest corporate restructurings, with a plan to separate its media interests, which include CBS television, from \$4.6 billion of industrial operations. Page 29

In town

A Labour government would discourage the development of out-of-town shopping centres and give preference to traditional high street development plans. Page 32

Jobless total falls below two million

By PHILIP BASKETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BRITAIN'S headline unemployment total dipped below two million for the first time for five years yesterday and government ministers forecast that the long fall is set to continue.

Ministers used the new fall to renew their attack on European job policies, especially the EU's 48-hour working time directive. Labour, meanwhile, attacked the figures as a "conjuring trick".

The actual number of people out of work and claiming benefits in October fell 126,496 to 1,977,235 — the first time the unemployment total has been below two million since early 1991.

Seasonally adjusted unemployment, generally taken as a better guide to the trend, is expected to follow suit within the next month or so, though yesterday's fall of 40,800, while larger than expected, kept the adjusted total above two million at 2,000,000.

Adjusted claimant count unemployment fell for both men and women, and in every region around the country.

taking the proportion out of work to 7.2 per cent. The overall drop was the biggest since December 1994, taking unemployment to its lowest level since February 1991.

Whitehall officials suggested there were a number of special factors behind the fall, which they said might be overstated by as much as 10,000 — a number they expect to see return to the count next month.

John Major said he had "no doubts" that the fall would continue, while his deputy, Michael Heseltine, said the "massive" drop indicated the strength of Britain's "sparkling" economic performance.

However, John Prescott, Labour's deputy leader, said that while unemployment was falling, Britain's workforce was declining too — a "Tory conjuring trick" showing the Government has "fixed the figures".

Ministers welcome, page 1
William Piers-Morgan, page 20
Numbers game, page 31

Fed leaves funds rate unchanged

By JANET BOWEN

ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

AMERICAN interest rates were left unchanged yesterday by the Federal Open Market Committee, the outcome expected by the markets. The Fed Funds rate, which banks charge each other for overnight money, remains at 5.25 per cent.

The meeting coincided with figures yesterday showing a modest rise in American producer prices in October of 0.4 per cent, weaker than Wall Street analysts had expected. The rate of core producer price inflation fell 0.3 per cent, a figure which confirmed that inflationary pressures remain subdued.

The US central bank clearly saw little merit in this week's call from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to take out "some insurance" against higher inflation through raising rates.

Bank campaigns, page 28
Tempos, page 30

Halifax raises its fixed rates

By ANNE ASHWORTH

THE Halifax Building Society is withdrawing its existing fixed-rate mortgage terms in response to October's increase in base rates.

The Halifax, which is Britain's biggest provider of home loans with 2.5 million borrowers, is leaving its variable rate unchanged at 6.99 per cent. But fixed and discounted rates for two to five years will start at 5.29 per cent for a two-year loan for existing customers moving home, compared with 4.99 per cent.

Although the rates will be less keen than previously, cashbacks of as much as £10,000 are still available. The society, which is set to shed its mutual status and become a bank next year, has pledged not to change its variable rate until after the Budget this month.

The Halifax's move follows the Nationwide's decision on Tuesday to increase its standard variable rate by 0.25 percentage points to 6.74 per cent. Other larger lenders have declined to raise their

rates for fear of damaging the property market. Mike Blackburn, the Halifax chief executive, said: "With the continued recovery in the housing market and the recent base rate rise, we are positioning our mortgage rates at a sensible level to avoid over-stimulation in the market. This should be the position of any responsible lender to ensure that the boom-bust cycle of the late 1980s/early 1990s is avoided."

The society is abolishing unpopular redemption penalties for early repayment on discounted variable-rate loans and only applying these fees on fixed-rate offers if the mortgage is redeemed in the fixed-rate period.

There has been criticism of the lock-in periods being imposed on borrowers who were obliged to stay faithful to the same lender for as long as seven years, or pay a fee of three to six months' interest, or a percentage of the total loan.

The Halifax is expected to be capitalised at £10 billion when it goes public next year.

Sir Chips defiant as Hambros recovers

By JASON NISSE

SIR CHIPS KESWICK, who next year takes over from Lord Hambro as chairman of Hambros, yesterday rejected pressure for the merchant bank to sell its 52 per cent stake in Hambros Countrywide. He said Hambros may even raise its stake in the estate agency chain.

Regent Pacific, the Hong Kong fund, has been pressing Hambros to sell its holding in Countrywide ever since it took a 3 per cent stake in the merchant bank in September. Yesterday, Michael Sorkin, the Hambros deputy chairman, attacked Jim Mellon, the head of Regent, saying: "We have not found any support for him

in our shareholder base." Mr Sorkin added that it was an odd time to sell Countrywide shares when it had just returned to profit and there were opportunities for Hambros to sell its services to Countrywide's 70,000 customers.

However, the Regent camp rejected Hambros' attack and claimed that it had the support of some of the UK's largest shareholders for its campaign to shake up Hambros. Sir Chips has been leading a restructuring of the company, and among the changes are his elevation to the chairmanship, replacing Lord Hambro who will be 67 next year.

Another will be redundancies for up to 100 Hambros staff in the next six months

as the company cuts its costs. Hambros was able to reveal a return to profit in the six months to September 30, showing a pre-tax profit of £55 million (£7.7 million loss). Earnings per share were 7.2p (10.9p loss). An unchanged dividend of 2.5p is payable on December 23.

The recovery came from a return to profits at Countrywide, the absence of large scale loan write-offs and a £15 million profit from the sale of Hambros' stake in Thorn Lighting, a management buyout. Operating profits in banking fell from £15.9 million to £10 million. The shares fell 7.5p to 245p.

Tempos, page 30



Hambros: stepping down

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Eurotunnel begins to see daylight

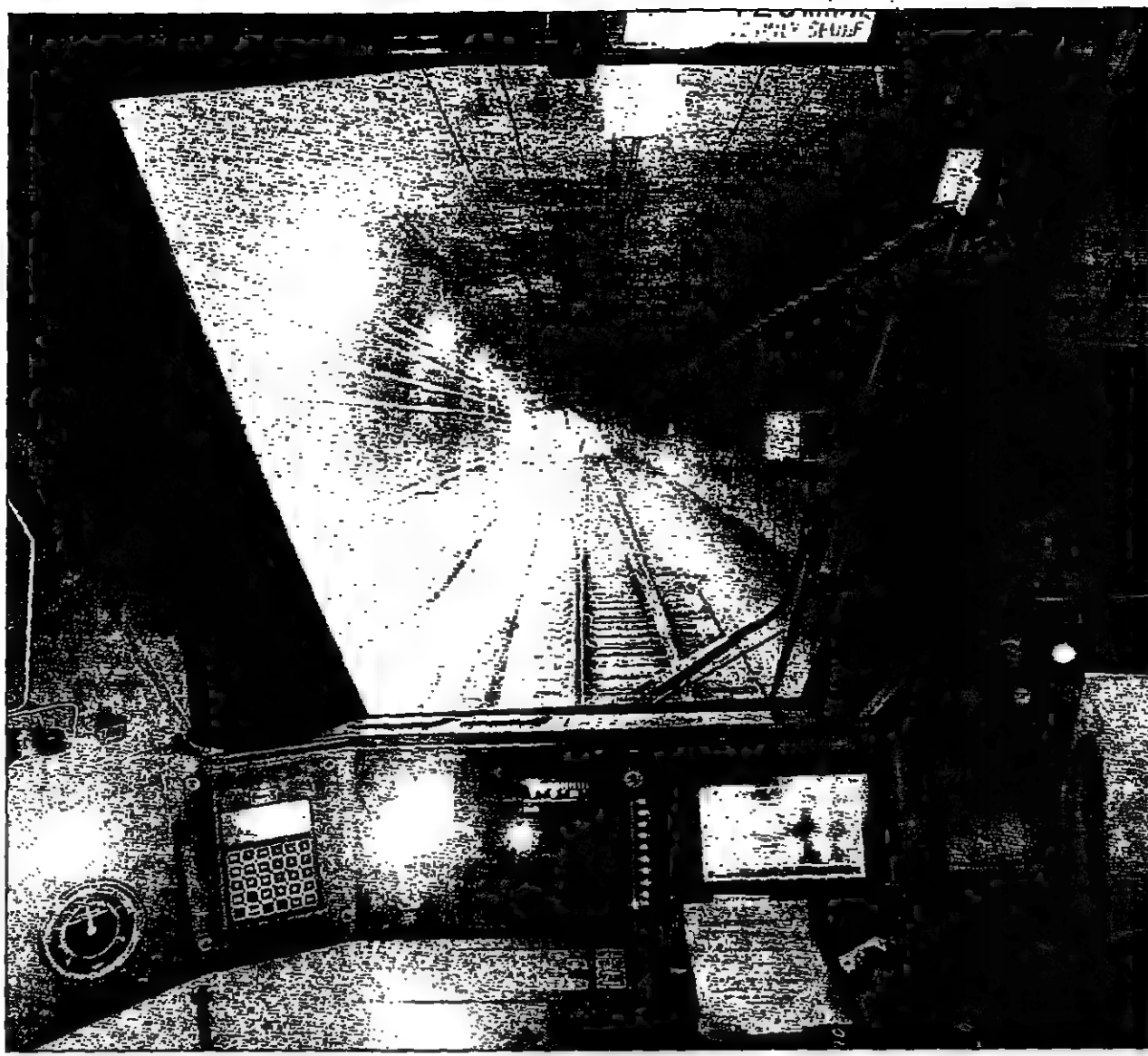
By JONATHAN PRYNN
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

EUROTUNNEL underlined the growing commercial success of Le Shuttle passenger and freight train services yesterday with record third-quarter turnover of £138.4 million for the third quarter of the year, a rise of 70 per cent.

The £362.1 million total for the year to date is close to double the £185.8 million earned in the same period last year, compared with a target of increasing sales by 50 per cent in 1996.

The company is also believed to be on course for a strong fourth quarter with traffic levels on some days in October and early November exceeding the high summer peaks in August. The ferry companies have been hit by strong winds and rough seas, which have encouraged many passengers to put their cars on the train instead.

Last month the company claimed that it is now carrying "approaching 50 per cent" of the cars travelling between Dover or Folkestone and Calais. Eurotunnel is still trying to persuade its banks to agree to a £4 billion refinancing of its debts, which have threatened to put it out of business, in spite of the rapid growth in business.



The way ahead looks better for Eurotunnel as increased traffic brought record third-quarter turnover of £138.4 million

Bank of England steps up campaign for tighter money

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

SPECULATION that Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, will come under pressure to raise interest rates again increased yesterday with confirmation that the Bank of England pushed aggressively for tighter money in late September.

The minutes of the September 23 monetary meeting published yesterday, showed that the Chancellor had rejected

the Bank's advice to raise interest rates then, only to give in to the Bank's wishes a month later.

The language employed by Eddie George, Governor of the Bank, was emphatic. In recent months, he had expressed a preference for higher rates but, at the late September meeting, this had hardened into official advice. On top of this, Mr George added the warning

that, if Mr Clarke failed to act, an even larger rise in rates might be needed. The Governor said the longer a tightening was delayed, the sharper it would eventually need to be. But he also added that, if the buoyancy of the last month's data were to be confirmed over the weeks leading up to the October meeting, it might be necessary to tighten policy more sharply. Economists at

NatWest Markets said: "In other words, hurry up and raise rates by 0.25 per cent, or we will be asking for 0.50 per cent."

Mr Clarke raised rates by 0.25 per cent to 6 per cent on October 30 but the Bank said in its *Inflation Report*, published last week, that rates would have to rise again in due course if the Government wanted to hit its target for

underlying inflation of 2.5 per cent or less.

The report appeared to imply that the Bank regards the 0.25 per cent rise in rates as only a first instalment and that it will seek further rate increases. The Bank's increasingly hawkish tone was repeated earlier this week when Mr George said sterling's recent strength would help to bear down on inflation in the short term, but was no substitute for higher interest rates because it had little impact on domestic demand.

Speculation of further rate rises is likely to be heightened — at least in the short-term — if today's inflation figures show, as the City expects, that underlying inflation rose to 3 per cent in October, boosted partly by higher petrol prices. But many economists believe October's inflation rate may prove to be a temporary peak and that inflation will resume its downward trend, courtesy of subdued industrial costs and prices. Mr Clarke and Mr George meet again to discuss rates on December 11.

Temper, page 30

CU shares rise despite dip in profits

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

SHARES of Commercial Union rose 6p to 645p yesterday despite a fall in the composite insurer's nine-month pre-tax profit, from £384 million to £348 million.

Strong growth in Europe, particularly France and The Netherlands, helped to offset the effects of a £62 million rise in weather claims in the UK and US. IFA bombs in London and Manchester cost CU £9 million.

John Carter, chief executive,

said profits in France rose 50 per cent, to £84 million, and had benefited from the contribution of the Abellie companies acquired in 1994. In The Netherlands, Delta Lloyd profits grew 21 per cent, to £127 million. Worldwide life operations, 43 per cent of CU's business, produced profits 11 per cent higher at £178 million. New annual life premiums increased 31 per cent to £2.2 billion and single premiums by 15 per cent.

General insurance conditions remained competitive in the UK, which accounts for 10 per cent of worldwide premiums. CU's general insurance premium income fell 12 per cent, to £1.04 billion. However, CU said there were signs that competition was moderating in motor insurance. Operating earnings per share were 33.1p (40.7p).

CU hopes to set up a life assurance operation in the Czech Republic next year.



Carter: French success

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SEE PAGE 2 FOR TODAY'S EUROSTAR TOKEN

CHANGING TIMES

Bruntcliffe wins in the High Court

By JASON NISSE

BRUNTCLEFFE Aggregates, the quarry company, has won a £1.25 million judgment in the High Court against its large shareholder, Mineral & General Investments.

Mr Justice Lloyd has told M&GI, based in the Channel Islands, that it must pay Bruntcliffe all but \$80,000 of the price agreed between them in the sale of assets in Lorain Coal, an American company, in 1994. M&GI had argued the assets were not worth the value put on them by Bruntcliffe, but is now having to pay the price in four instalments, plus interest and costs.

M&GI is attempting to have the share re-enclosed in a case that will test, for the first time in UK courts, the legal basis for disenfranchisement.

Bruntcliffe disenfranchised M&GI's 9.3 per cent stake in the company in December 1994 after it claimed it was not satisfied with the replies to a notice under Section 212 of the Companies Act requiring M&GI to disclose its ownership. Bruntcliffe believes the shares are held by Anthony Hanson and Paul Kaye, two former Bruntcliffe directors who want to oust Mike Wallis, the chief executive from the board.

M&GI is attempting to have the share re-enclosed in a case that will test, for the first time in UK courts, the legal basis for disenfranchisement.

European exports lift ABI Leisure

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

ABI LEISURE GROUP, the caravan manufacturer, yesterday said that growth in European exports had helped the company to report a 19.5 per cent increase in full-year profits, to £5 million.

The company's turnover grew 8 per cent, to £92.4 million. The company manufactures about 15,000 caravans a year. Its models range from touring caravans to leisure homes.

European exports advanced to £41.4 million, contributing 45 per cent of total turnover, the company announced. It added that it had also increased its share of the

touring caravan market in the United Kingdom, helped by an improvement in its dealer network. However, sales of French caravanning holidays in the United Kingdom fell due to the recent strength of the franc.

George Shiels, the chairman, described the company's performance this year as "encouraging". However, he added that the increase in exports had shifted the profit balance to the second half of the financial year.

The company will increase the final dividend by 18 per cent, to 3.47p, payable on December 3.

Chelsea wants £30m for rebuilding

By JASON NISSE

KEN BATES, the chairman of Chelsea Village, confirmed yesterday that the company, which owns Chelsea, the Premiership football team, is attempting to raise £30 million to complete the redevelopment of its ground at Stamford Bridge.

News of the fundraising was revealed in *The Times* a month ago when it emerged that the late Matthew Harding had been in talks with potential backers, including George Soros, the investor. The money will be used to complete the development of the southern complex, which will include a hotel and offices, and rebuild the west stand at the ground.

Alan Shaw, company secretary of Chelsea, said the company was not necessarily talking to the same parties as those approached by Mr Harding. "We don't know who Matthew was talking to, no one approached us," said Mr Shaw. He added it had not been decided how much of the £30 million would be new shares and how much would be debt.

Mr Harding, who was deputy chairman, first became involved in the club



Bates: confirmed seeking funds

when he lent £5 million to fund the building of the new north stand. His 25 per cent stake is in the hands of trustees for his family, and could be sold in the wake of the resignation of Peter Middleton, the former chief executive of Lloyd's of London, from Chelsea's board last

week. Mr Middleton, who now works for Salomon Brothers, the US bank, represented Mr Harding's interests on Chelsea's board. Mr Bates, yesterday described Mr Middleton as having "delusions of grandeur".

Despite the boardroom rows and apparent need to raise new money, Chelsea shares hit a new high yesterday of 119p, up 2p, giving it a market value of £160 million.

Rysaffe, the Hong Kong company which is Chelsea's largest shareholder, confirmed selling 100,000 shares in the company at prices ranging from 120p a share to 125p this week. This is the latest in a stream of disposals by Rysaffe, which has seen its stake in the club fall from 66 per cent to 38.3 per cent since Chelsea floated on the AIM this year.

Mr Bates holds proxies from Rysaffe to vote its shares for any motion he proposes, but says he does not know who the beneficial owner is. Companies wishing to know who owns their shares can send out notices under Section 212 of the Companies Act and disenfranchise the shares if unhappy with the answer.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Shanks & McEwan wins £9m order

SHANKS & MCEWAN, the waste management group, has received an order worth up to £9 million over three years to incinerate rendered meat and bone meal from cattle over 30 months old. It is the first such order to be made after the Government's decision to eliminate all cattle over BSE. The company will incinerate at least 45,000 tonnes of meat and bone at a temperature of up to 1,300°C.

None of the material will come from cattle showing any signs of BSE, the company emphasised; that is handled at other facilities. The company expects the incinerating to begin before the end of this year. Michael Averill, chief executive of Shanks & McEwan, said: "We are delighted that our high-technology facilities have been selected to provide treatment of this material. Some investment in handling facilities is necessary and is already well advanced." The work will be performed at the Fawley high-temperature incinerator of Rechem International, a subsidiary of Shanks & McEwan.

Jacobs looks at Ropner

ROPNER, the troubled engineering and shipping concern, is in takeover talks with Jacobs that could bring an end to its 120-year history as an independent company. Jacobs yesterday increased its stake in Ropner to just under 10 per cent and said that any offer was likely to be settled in shares rather than cash. It added that any valuation would take into account Ropner's recent trading statement, where it gave a warning that its year-end pre-tax profits would be almost halved to £2.6 million. Ropner's shares rose 6p to 107p yesterday, giving it a market value of £25 million.

'Intranet' alliance

BRITISH Telecom, MCI — the second largest American long-distance phone company — and Microsoft yesterday announced an expanded alliance to develop a range of global "intranet", or private Internet, services. The alliance follows an agreement reached in January by MCI and Microsoft to develop a broad range of online, Internet and networking services, and plans revealed last week by BT to buy MCI for \$20 billion. The intranet services will include Web-searching, electronic mail, software distribution and information management tools.

Borthwicks slumps

INTERIM profits at Borthwicks, the natural flavours company, were halved after poor summer weather depressed sales of ice cream and drinks. In the six months to September 28, pre-tax profit was £652,000, compared with £1.26 million a year ago. Turnover was down 5.8 per cent, to £16.3 million. The interim dividend, payable on January 24, is being maintained at 0.5p per share. Earnings per share were 0.78p, compared with 1.75p a year ago. The company said there are some signs of restocking by UK customers, which indicates better prospects for the second half.

Cirqual beats forecast

CIRQUAL, the specialist engineering company listed on the Alternative Investment Market, beat its prospectus forecast yesterday with maiden pre-tax profits of £2.96 million (£2.52 million) for the year to August 31. Cirqual said it has made big gains in market share since its formation last year, and is looking for more acquisitions. Its earnings were 12p per share (10.2p), and it is paying a dividend of 0.9p. Since its year end, it has bought Wolston Engineering for £7.5 million and has won an order from British Aerospace to convert 25 passenger aircraft to carry freight. The shares rose 10p to a 157p high.

Voilex shift pays off

A SHIFT towards telecommunications helped Voilex, the cable company, to protect its margins in the six months to September 30. Exposure to the higher-margin phone cables market helped halve pre-tax profits to grow 23 per cent to £6.32 million on sales down 4.5 per cent to £85.5 million. Ken Hooper, finance director, said the growth had come in spite of a stagnant performance from its non-cable assemblies division. There are no plans for its disposal but Voilex would be willing to consider an offer at the right price. An interim of 7.35p (7p) is due on February 4.

Greenwich green light

GREENWICH Lloyd's Underwriting, the newly formed Lloyd's members' agency, has received formal consent from Lloyd's to act as a members' agent from January 1, 1997. Angus Gilroy, a partner in Binder Hamlyn, has been appointed a non-executive director. Greenwich has been formed by the merger of four Lloyd's members' agents: REF, Kershaw, Castle Members' Agents, Holman MacLeod and Marlborough Underwriting Agency. The agency has £487 million in underwriting capacity under management for the 1996 account.

EXCHANGE RATES

	£/\$	£/DM	£/FF	£/Y
Australia	1.54	1.36	1.36	1.36
Belgium	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36
Canada	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36
France	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36
Germany	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36
Italy	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36
Japan	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36
Netherlands	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36
Portugal	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36
Spain	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36
Sweden	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36
Switzerland	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36
Taiwan	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36
UK	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36
USA	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36

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□ Dilemma over US power bids □ Looking forward to Eurotelecoms floats □ Breaking the cosy pensions club

Lang's tangled American wires

THE American bid for yet another of our regional electricity companies may seem to be all over bar the shouting, after a public debate on the value of the company and an equally private deal between the bidder and the board. But it does present the Government with a dilemma.

Dominion Resources of Virginia is a staid, well-financed utility renowned for its caution. By contrast, the offer for Northern Electric, from yet another American company, CalEnergy, has aroused anxious calls for a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. CalEnergy is on rather less firm financial ground, much of its borrowings effectively junk bonds. The market thinks Dominion likely to succeed, and CalEnergy to be referred.

This is probably what the Government would prefer. The last few utilities bids have had a bad run of luck, from the bids by the two generators for their own regional distributors to the rival offers for South West Water, all blocked by Government decree. The odd one should now go through, both to preserve the fiction of a free market and because checks on both might cause matching problems for mergers such as BT-MCI and British Airways-American Air-

lines in the US. The problem is how Dominion can be distinguished from CalEnergy.

Ian Lang cannot simply say that he does not much like the look of the latter, and ship them back to Nebraska where they came from. On the other hand, distinguishing between the two companies' finances, raises the risk of an outraged CalEnergy taking action in the courts. It has been suggested that he may rely on the East Midlands bid being agreed, and Northern's contested. This is nonsense, first because a Northern agreement is not out of the question and also because it runs contrary to competition policy that stresses the primacy of shareholders' rights against those of incumbent management.

All this is important because of the mass of other American companies thought to be eyeing up the three remaining independent regional companies. It also raises the question why two of those three have never been bid for, London in particular is enormously attractive, having

low investment costs because so much of the wires are underground and cannot blow over.

Yorkshire, however, is not best placed to benefit from economic recovery and has shown itself particularly concerned about free competition in 1998.

Why are these two still the wallflowers? The best answer is that both share their territory with overlapping water companies, with whom a quick and easy merger could be arranged if hostiles appear on the horizon. But with the available targets fast disappearing, this might not be enough to prevent the Americans from trying.

Ringing endorsement

IT IS true. The Italians do talk a lot, on the phone at least. This is not a crude racial stereotype but a fact, and here are the figures to prove it. Vodafone and Cellnet see about 40 minutes a month use from their UK retail customers. Italian phone users



use their mobiles almost twice as much, clocking up 70 minutes a month.

This may be a reflection of the novelty of such phones in Italy—they are still a fashion statement there, my dear, and owners pay the highest rates in Europe. But it bodes well for next autumn's sale of Telecom Italia, the state-controlled but stock market-quoted telephone operator. So too should the roaring success of Deutsche Telekom, which closes today after having to be increased in size by 20 per cent to satisfy demand. But in fact the knock-on effect for the Italians will be limited because their float is a secondary offering that will

not go to anything like the huge premium expected for DT.

The real impact of the huge German issue, worth upwards of \$12 billion, will be on next spring's flotation of France Télécom. Barclays de Zoete Wedd put a value of \$30 billion on that company in the summer, a sum that can only have crept up since. The French Government is likely to sell 25 per cent at first, and this, like Deutsche, is another of those must-have issues for big investors.

What will be interesting is how closely the Deutsche model, itself based on the British method of selling state assets, will be followed by the French. The value of Deutsche Telekom has been raised by pricing off the strong retail demand, as much as half the shares likely to go to private investors, which means institutions will at first be left short. Where Deutsche differs from BT, which started the telecoms privatisation ball rolling in 1984, is that the shares have not been priced too attractively for institutions that will be long-term

holders. The French, who tend to take a proprietorial view of their national champions, could well do the same.

Questionable approach

DID some bright spark seriously believe that trustees of pension schemes would willingly sit down and answer 230 complex questions about a former scheme member who had ill-advisedly moved his fund to a personal pension? Someone (or more likely a committee of someone) at the Association of British Insurers and the National Association of Pension Funds was keeping very quiet as the Securities and Investments Board announced the scrapping of this ridiculously unwieldy questionnaire.

The most charitable assumption about those 230 questions is that their authors were desperately trying to be fair to the investors whose compensation they were trying to calculate.

One might less charitably conclude that the long-winded questionnaire was a deliberate ploy to delay the unwelcome prospect of paying compensation. The pensions industry is a cosy club. The ABI and the NAPF cannot pretend to be surprised that trustees are reluctant to spend time giving detailed information on former members without any obvious incentive to do so.

But it is disingenuous of SIB chairman Sir Andrew Large to shrug off responsibility on to the industry. The SIB may not have laid down the pattern for the questionnaire, but it condoned its distribution for two years. Two years too long.

Ethical values

LISTEN to some of the pious verbiage they spout and one might almost believe the average fund manager was a 2CV-driving, new Labour-voting Friend of the Earth whose dearest wish was to make the world a better place through his investments. But an Extel survey asked a range of large companies about their relationship with the City and whether fund managers raised ethical, environmental or corporate governance issues. Almost half said never; they were more interested in the dividend.

Westinghouse to split into two companies

By Eric Reguly

WESTINGHOUSE Electric yesterday unveiled one of America's largest corporate restructurings, with a plan to separate its media interests from \$4.6 billion of industrial operations.

The new industrial company, to be based in Pittsburgh, will retain the Westinghouse name and concentrate on power generation, including nuclear power plants and transport refrigeration systems.

The media company, as yet unnamed, will have its headquarters in New York and will comprise CBS, the TV broadcasting network that was purchased last year for \$5.4

billion, Group W Satellite Communications, a cable TV company, and Infinity Broadcasting, one of the country's largest radio groups.

Michael Jordan, the Westinghouse chairman, will stay with the media company. When the change is completed, each company will have its own publicly listed shares, directors and executives.

The spin-off of the industrial operations was designed to create two focused companies, allowing investors to choose between industrial operations and media.

Splitting Westinghouse is expected to take nine months. The tax-free spin-off has to be

approved by the US Internal Revenue Service.

The restructuring will take Westinghouse back to its roots. Westinghouse, one of America's oldest and best known companies, began as an electrical products company and pioneered atomic power for everything from electricity generation to ship propulsion. It became the second largest electricity generator after General Electric.

In the 1980s, it shed many of its businesses, including light bulb manufacturing, and diversified into areas such as financial services and broadcasting. The acquisition of CBS, one of the big three TV

networks, and its investment in Infinity made it one of the world's largest media groups.

Westinghouse had become so diverse that few Americans knew what it did anymore. In an advertising campaign, it referred to itself as "the best known unknown company in America".

Westinghouse will eliminate about 1,100 jobs, 5 per cent of the workforce, in its energy and power-generation businesses and take a \$125 million charge in the fourth quarter to cover redundancy costs.

It also plans to sell 20 per cent of Thermo King, its transport refrigeration company, to the public.

Willis Corroon to target US for bids

By Marianne Curphey

WILLIS CORROON, the international insurance broker, has lifted nine-month profits by 17 per cent to £88.2 million, in spite of difficult market conditions.

The result includes an £8.2 million contribution from the group's Lloyd's members' agency after the Lloyd's Reconstruction and Renewal Plan. It also includes £2.4 million pre-tax profit on the disposal of non-core businesses and of £2.1 million earned before they were sold. Earnings per share rose 18 per cent to 13.2p and balance sheet gearing was largely eliminated.

Pre-tax profits for the nine months of the group's continuing operations, excluding

Lloyd's and the disposals, came to £75.5 million, 14 per cent higher than those for the corresponding period last year.

Max Taylor, chief executive, said the group's principal focus was organic growth, but it would be targeting small acquisitions, particularly in the US retail market.

He added: "We ruled out at the mid year the idea that we would be seeking an alliance with one of the big six insurers, and although we reserve the right to review the situation, we do not believe that such a move would create value."

Tempos, page 30

Land Securities plans more sales

By Carl Mortished

LAND SECURITIES plans further asset sales this year in an attempt to restructure its portfolio, which is suffering from low rental growth and the high cost of a £500 million development programme.

Britain's largest quoted property company saw a fall in revenue pre-tax profits from £118 million to £116 million because of a rise in the cost of financing property developments. However, property disposals, including the sale of 33 Grosvenor Place, SW1, generated profits of £13.4 million.

Total pre-tax profit for the half year to September 30, including gains from disposals, was £120 million for the six-month period, up from £118 million in the previous year. Sir Peter Hunt, chairman, said

that he expected further sales in the second half and reported an improved demand from tenants and investors.

Land Securities spent £107.5 million in the period, including £79 million on development. Financing costs rose to £82 million (£79.7 million).

Sir Peter said that schemes were under consideration that could add a further five million sq ft to the portfolio.

Net rental income rose only 1 per cent to £201 million during the period. The company is paying an interim dividend of 7.35p, up 3.5 per cent from the half-year payout last time. Adjusted earnings per share, excluding property sales was 16.17p (16.5p).

Tempos, page 30

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Money worries return to haunt investors

CONCERNS about dearer money came back to haunt stock market investors as the latest unemployment figures provided proof that the economy is still gathering pace.

The stronger than expected drop in the jobless figures during October, to the lowest level since February 1991, is likely to increase pressure on Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to signal a further rise in interest rates.

Last week in its quarterly *Inflation Report*, the Bank of England urged the Government to raise rates again — just a week after initiating the first rise for two years.

It all proved too much for the equity market. An early mark-up on the back of another positive performance overnight on Wall Street was quickly whittled away, leaving the FT-SE 100 index 7.4 down at 3,926.9 at the close.

As expected, East Midlands and Dominion Resources, the US power generator, agreed terms of a £1.3 billion bid after late-night talks on Tuesday. The cash terms value the regional electricity company at 670p a share. Only last month, shares of East Midlands were changing hands at 500p, but they rose sharply after Dominion was forced to concede it was considering a bid at about the 600p level.

That was dismissed out of court by the East Midlands board, but with dealers worried by the possibility of a referral of the bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, shares of East Midlands finished just 11.5p better at 622.5p.

Elsewhere in the electricity sector, PowerGen advanced 6.1p to 550.4p before half-year figures this morning that are expected to show pre-tax profits down from £133 million to £124 million.

Vendome, the luxury goods group, fell 16p to 54.5p after a profits downgrade by ABN Amro Hoare Govett, its own broker. It cut its forecast for the current year by £10 million to £270 million and for 1997 from £315 million to £305 million. Hoare blames its move on the impact of a strong pound on the Swiss franc, which makes it difficult selling overseas.

British Gas rose 6p to 198.5p as UBS, the broker, reiterated its "buy" recommendation on the shares. BT hardened 1.2p to 360.4p after NatWest Securities urged cli-



STOCK MARKET MICHAEL CLARK

ents to "add" to their holdings. Confirmation that Lasso, the oil company, expects to hit new production targets set for 1997 lifted the shares 8.1p to 210p as 5.5 million were traded.

The new production target of 200,000 barrels a day is a 12 per cent increase on this year's target. Joe Darby, chief executive, says this production level should be maintained for the next five years by developing existing fields. It does not include 14 discoveries under way or awaiting development.

Bid speculation continued to drive shares of House of Fraser, the stores group, higher. They ended 3p better at 144.5p on turnover of almost a million shares. Once again Burton Group, 1.5p easier at 143p, is seen as the most likely bidder. House of Fraser has

been a disappointment to investors since it was floated on the stock market, with the shares rocked by difficult trading and at least one profits warning.

Heavy turnover was recorded in Sears with almost 11 million shares traded as the price firmed 2p to 89p. UniChem lost another 3p to 246p, further devaluing the

shares of its bid for Lloyds Chemist. The original terms valued Lloyds at £657 million, but the deal is now valued at only £633 million. Institutions appear to be favouring the all-cash offer from Cohe, the German pharmaceutical supplier. Lloyds remained steady at 511.5p.

Third-quarter figures from Commercial Union failed to match Tuesday's numbers

in the futures pit a total of 65,000 contracts were completed as the December series of the long gilt fell 1/8 to £108 1/8.

In the cash market, benchmark Treasury 8 per cent 2015 came off £1 1/8 to £100 1/8, while among shorter dated coupons, Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was £1 1/2 off at £102 1/2.

NEW YORK: The Dow Jones industrial average pulled back from its record run at midday, dropping 19.01 points to 6,247.03.

Shares in the building supplies group have been trading at a low of 134p, but with more than 500,000 of them changing hands yesterday, the company now appears vulnerable.

Losses of 1/2 were quickly recorded on the back of the latest unemployment figures showing the number of people out of work down to its lowest level since February 1991.

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MAJOR INDICES	
New York (midday):	
Dow Jones	6247.03 (-19.01)
S&P Composite	726.63 (-0.94)
Tokyo:	
Nikkei Average	20779.44 (-226.99)
Hong Kong:	
Hang Seng	12943.69 (-137.39)
Amsterdam:	
BOE Index	602.02 (-4.42)
Sydney:	
NO	3248.9 (-3.4)
Frankfurt:	
DAX	2774.43 (-13.12)
Singapore:	
Strait	2146.68 (-18.63)
Brussels:	
Paris	10078.80 (-34.91)
CAC-40	2217.19 (-11.94)
Zurich:	
SEA One	826.40 (-2.00)

LONDON:	
FT 30	2765.5 (-4.8)
FT 100	3926.9 (-7.4)
FTSE Mid 250	4410.2 (-5.4)
FTSE 250	1961.2 (-3.2)
FTSE Europe 100	1760.3 (-5.6)
FT All-Share	1936.77 (-2.0)
FT Non Financials	2425.4 (-1.8)
FT Financials	1115.3 (-0.7)
FT Govt 500	92.68 (-0.18)
Barclays	346.15
BSA Vantage	851.30
USM (Dunelm)	302.25 (+0.9)
USM	1494.2 (-0.025)
German Mark	2.4621 (+0.022)
Swiss Franc	1.4141 (-0.001)
Bank of England official rate (p.m.)	1.25%
ECU	1.3231
100	151.8 Sep (2.1%) Jan 1997=100
100	151.6 Sep (2.9%) Jan 1997=100

RECENT ISSUES	
Beaufort (3)	4
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Britt Allcock	159
Charles Taylor	165
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Capital Ship 625 n/p	2
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Springwood n/p	82

MAJOR CHANGES	
Adams & Harvey	336p (+25p)
BS Group	186p (+13p)
Cable News	175p (+12p)
Fingert Kms	286p (+13p)
Body Shop	225p (+8p)
Body Shop	225p (+8p)
Business Post	480p (+12p)
Biocomps Int	590p (+15p)
Fleasch	685p (+15p)
Next	558p (+12p)
Guinness	453p (+8p)
St. James's Place	238p (+8p)
Photobank	385p (+8p)
Danka Bn Sys	650p (+12p)
FALLS:	
Pet City	460p (-5p)
Liberty	390p (-25p)
Vendome	544p (-18p)
Scotlec	575p (-10p)
Micro Focus	870p (-15p)

Closing Prices Page 36

Spoiling the victory

OVER the next fortnight, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will decide whether his budget will be fiscally responsible, a bribe to voters or an attempt to drag the carpet from under the feet of Gordon Brown, his shadow. One recent event — the quarter-point interest rate rise — has tended to water down the cynicism that drives the "cash for votes" theory about generous tax cuts.

The problem is Britain's burgeoning structural deficit. The borrowing requirement for 1996 is now forecast to be £27 billion, almost £5 billion more than at the time Kenneth Clarke last announced the Government's recipe for the economy. If these sums are to fall, he cannot be generous with tax giveaways and if he is indeed worried about inflation he will have regard to the buoyant GDP figures, the fall in unemployment and

signs that consumers are spending. Indeed, there is no need to pump money into an economy driven by a consumer recovery unless the Government wants to reward a Labour government with an old-fashioned Labour-style bout of price inflation. A windfall worth £18 billion £20 billion could add to the pot of money for building societies. Compared to that sort of pump-priming, the Chancellor's expected budget giveaway of some £3 billion is gilding the lily.

One way or the other the Chancellor has to cut taxes. Without a show of bravado, he will be crucified by his own side before the Labour party gets close enough to land a punch. That suggests a consumer boom followed swiftly by a monetary squeeze. Is Labour already in power?

Hambros

HAMBROS is in need of friends, unusual for such a venerable City institution and one of the few London merchant banks still to retain its independence. But its principals, notably Sir Chips Keswick who is stepping into the chairman's shoes, have asked for the market's indulgence while they attempt to bring some life back to a bank that has spent the 1990s in decline.

But to win time, Sir Chips has to deliver something much better than the half-year figures presented yesterday. Hambros is essentially three elements — a bank, an investment company and a quoted estate agents chain, Hambro Countrywide. The latter two are doing quite nicely, thank you, because of the recovery in the housing market and

Land Securities

WHATEVER caused Land Securities shares to rise yesterday, it cannot have been the half-year figures which were as dreary as a 1960s office building. Sentiment flowing from the previous day's offering from Capital Shopping Centres might be the explanation. However, the comparison is one of apples and pears.

The revenue account tells the whole story: rents barely moved ahead since the first half of the previous financial year. At the same time, Land Sec has been working hard to fill vacant space and the void rate has fallen to a mere 2 1/2 per cent of the rent roll. That, suggests that the 1 per cent rise in net rents for the half year may include more than a few falls in income as tenants leave and new leases are agreed at lower rents.

Land Sec is doing the right things in spending heavily on rejuvenating its portfolio but there is no reason for investors to expect bounty in the year end property revaluation. CSC is an unusual creature, owning two very large out-of-town shopping centres which are attracting more than their fair share of consumer spending, to the detriment of the high street. In contrast, Land Sec's retail portfolio contains many town centre malls as well as high street shops.

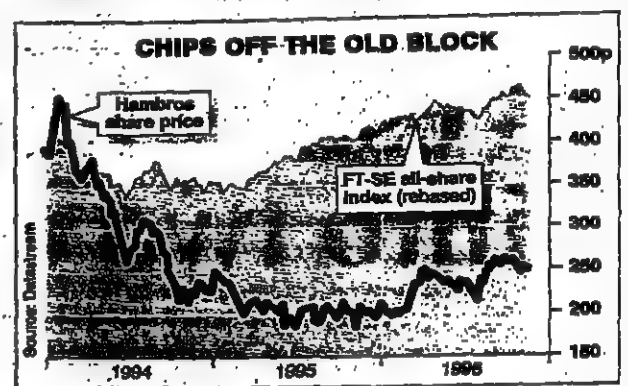
It will be a long haul for Land Sec and if foreign funds are again buying over-rented London offices, the company should be grateful if some of that cash comes their way.

Willis Corroon

FACED with low premium rates and a shift by industry towards self-insurance, UK-based brokers have this year been forced to run in order to stand still.

This week, Sedgewick and Willis Corroon, which reported yesterday, complained about "severe downturn" and "difficult" conditions. In

Hambros' antagonistic shareholder, Regent Pacific, talks darkly of breaking the group up, arguing that the estate agency tail is wagging the banking dog. Given a share price of 245p yesterday, a stated net asset value of 267p and a probable realisation value of 400p, Regent's proposal could gain support.



the circumstances, Willis's nine-month performance is creditable. Even without disposals and the £8.2 million contribution from Lloyd's, pre-tax profit rose 14 per cent. Revenue growth in the UK and the US, and cost containment helped. However, costs need to be cut further if profits are to continue to grow next year, because Willis is unlikely to enjoy the same level of profit commission from Lloyd's in 1997. The City believes the contribution from the group's Lloyd's members' agency may drop to £2 million next year and disappear completely in 1998.

Willis has ruled out a merger with one of the "big six" global insurance brokers and is looking instead for US-style acquisitions in the US retail market. While it still makes profits, this cautious approach will spare Willis the pain of trying to marry its own culture with that of a rival.

EDITED BY CARL MORTSHED

COMMODITIES

LIFTS	
Dec	103.80 Mar
Mar	103.80 Mar
May	103.80 Jul
Jul	103.80 Jul
Oct	103.80 Jul
Dec	103.80 Jul
Dec	103.80 Jul
Dec	103.80 Jul

ROBUSTA COFFEE	
Nov	145.140 Jul
Jan	145.140 Jul
Mar	145.140 Jul
May	145.140 Jul
Jul	145.140 Jul
Oct	145.140 Jul
Dec	145.140 Jul
Dec	145.140 Jul

WHITE SUGAR	
Nov	30.50 Jul
Jan	30.50 Jul
Mar	30.50 Jul
May	30.50 Jul
Jul	30.50 Jul
Oct	30.50 Jul
Dec	30.50 Jul
Dec	30.50 Jul

MEAT & LIVESTOCK	
Nov	103.80 Mar
Mar	103.80 Mar
May	103.80 Jul
Jul	103.80 Jul
Oct	103.80 Jul
Dec	103.80 Jul
Dec	103.80 Jul
Dec	103.80 Jul

LIFE OPTIONS	
Nov	103.80 Mar
Mar	103.80 Mar
May	103.80 Jul
Jul	103.80 Jul
Oct	103.80 Jul
Dec	103.80 Jul
Dec	103.80 Jul
Dec	103.80 Jul

COMMODITIES

ICE-40R (London L000)	
Nov	22.85 +0.55
Mar	22.85 +0.55
May	22.85 +0.55
Jul	22.85 +0.55
Oct	22.85 +0.55
Dec	22.85 +0.55
Dec	22.85 +0.55
Dec	22.85 +0.55

ICE-40R (London L000)	
Nov	22.85 +0.55
Mar	22.85 +0.55
May	22.85 +0.55
Jul	22.85 +0.55
Oct	22.85 +0.55
Dec	22.85 +0.55
Dec	22.85 +0.55
Dec	22.85 +0.55

ICE-40R (London L000)	
Nov	22.85 +0.55
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May	22.85 +0.55
Jul	22.85 +0.55
Oct	22.85 +0.55
Dec	22.85 +0.55
Dec	22.85 +0.55
Dec	22.85 +0.55

ICE-40R (London L000)	

THE
TIMES
CITY
DIARY

Tanks for
the memory

JEFFREY ROBINSON, best-selling author of *The Laundrymen*, feels very aggrieved. Journalists in The Netherlands were flicking through review copies of a new book, *Fraude*, when they realised that it was almost a word-for-word copy of Robinson's own tome, published locally as *De Witte Waters*.

Arie Olivier, a convicted fraudster, is being accused of plagiarism, libel and breach of copyright. Olivier has previously published work detailing his illicit exploits. An angry Mr Robinson said: "I am intent on finding his pain threshold and driving through it with a Sherman tank."

Dummy selling

EVER wondered what Anthony Gooda was like as a young boy? Leafing through a copy of his prep-school magazine, I spot a small picture of the red-haired chappie, who went on to make his name as head of the most notorious Lloyd's syndicate. According to *The Wellbury Magazine*, from the Easter term, 1950: "A GOODA, stand-off half, played excellently in all school matches, quick off the mark in attack. He also has a safe pair of hands, and said an extremely good 'dummy' on many occasions."



Kyran Bracken: new kit for the game

Saracen blues

FOR the first time in 100 years, the Saracens will not play in their own rugby strip this Sunday. BZW has decked the boys — including Kyran Bracken, Philippe Sella, Tony Dipeolu and Tony Daly — in its own blue and white colours. Michael Lynagh, former Australian captain, will lead the team in a game sponsored by BZW against Queensland.

Champion Ken

LORD JENKINS of Hillhead was ruminating on the forthcoming Budget yesterday, at a lunch sponsored by KPMG. Speaking on behalf of the British Dyslexia Association, Lord Jenkins designed to describe Kenneth Clarke as a "rather good Chancellor", and a man of "spunk". He added that Mr Clarke had had "more willingness to stand up for his beliefs than all the other ministers put together". His recommendation for the Budget was "a touch on the brakes — both monetary and fiscal".

Pine people

WHAT do Clifford Chance and the Duke and Duchess of Kent have in common? They both have their Christmas trees delivered by a team of Santa's helpers in brightly coloured elves outfits. They have both hired Project Plants, the London landscaper, to install their sky-scraping pines.

THE Barclay Brothers have picked out the new china (farmhouse and turquoise) for the Ritz, that was used for the first time yesterday. Although the twins might not always agree, Luke DeLafose, the new general manager, assures me they pay every attention to detail.

MORAG PRESTON

Government plays numbers game to hail policy success

Philip Bassett

explains why analysts remain cautious in spite of the continuing downward trend

Gillian Shepherd, the Employment and Education Secretary, will today seize the opportunity in Paris to proclaim the success of Britain's economy, and its jobs market in particular, after the actual number of people out of work and claiming benefit in the UK yesterday fell below two million for the first time for five years.

At an Anglo-French conference on the changing world of work, Mrs Shepherd will highlight the fact that UK headline unemployment has dropped below the psychologically significant two million threshold as further support for the Government's rejection of key European jobs policies such as the 48-hour week working time directive.

The Employment Secretary will be following a string of delighted government ministers as she hails what Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, called the "massive" 40,000 drop in seasonally adjusted unemployment.

That the general election draws ever closer was underlined by Mr Heseltine, being the main ministerial voice on the figures yesterday, while Mrs Shepherd was busy launching her latest move towards a national nursery vouchers scheme. When the Secretary of State has been busy in the past, one of her junior ministers has handled the routine monthly announcements.

Headline unadjusted unemployment in October fell 126,486 to 1,977,235 — the first time it has been below the two million mark since January 1991. At that time it stood at 1,999,747 and rising, eventually moving to above three million two years later.

Although unadjusted unemployment counts the actual number of people unemployed and claiming benefit, Whitehall statisticians prefer the seasonally adjusted figure — a total derived by running the actual level through a computer programme which alters it to take account of seasonal fluctuations to allow for comparisons over time.

Despite the scale of yesterday's fall in adjusted unemployment — the biggest monthly drop since December 1994 — its total stayed just above the two million mark at 2,030,000. But Whitehall officials widely expect it to dip below two million in the next two months.

Seasonal factors pushed up the size of the drop in unadjusted unemployment to 6 per cent in a month. Adjusted, this decrease fell back to 2 per cent. But even within the normal health warnings about one month's set of figures, yesterday's totals should be treated with some caution. Politicians like Mrs Shepherd and Mr Heseltine are unequivocal in their use of the latest unemployment figures to proclaim the success of the Government's economic policies — but behind them their own officials are a good deal less certain.

Yesterday's seasonally adjusted fall,



for instance, is regarded with particular scepticism for a number of reasons. First, the claimant count was taken just four days before the Government's introduction last month of its controversial Job Seekers' Allowance — the new payment which has replaced the old unemployment benefit.

The planned deterrent effect of JSA, like other similar government welfare-to-work moves, is estimated by statisticians to be likely to clip perhaps 6,000 people a month off the count for the next six months. In addition, administrative changes for its start may have pushed up the size of this month's fall in adjusted unemployment to about 10,000 — a number officials expect to see bouncing back into the figures next month, and which should keep the adjusted total from dropping below two million.

Other suggested factors — little more than guesses really — include the ending of postal signing for benefit and the deterrent impact of the Benefit Agency's fraud telephone hotline, which officials say has so far received more than 100,000 calls. In addition, benefit officers are noticing a significant increase — up 17 per cent over the past year, and 4 per cent in the past month alone — in the number of people no longer turning up to sign on for their benefit. Figures also tend to be volatile at this time of the year because of the large number of people coming off the register to enter further education.

Such points may well make yesterday's figures more unreliable than usual. Only last week the Government, in a formal statement to the Commons' all-party Employment and Education

Select Committee, had to register its "regret" that the monthly claimant count figures are seen to be untrustworthy as an accurate indicator of unemployment.

But whatever the value of one particular set of figures, what is clearly not in question is that unemployment remains on a downward trend. Over the past year both the adjusted and the unadjusted figures tell the same story: unemployment is down by about 235,000, or some 10 per cent.

Since adjusted unemployment hit its peak in December 1992, it has risen four times and fallen 42 times. The total decline since then is now marching towards one million — 951,000 in all.

Yesterday's large drop, following a big fall of 37,900 for September, pushes the average monthly decline over the past three months to 32,000. But because of the special factors, government statisticians remain cautious, refusing as yet to lift their rough

estimate of the monthly trend change above 15,000 to 20,000.

One of the reasons they remain so is the employment figures — the number of people going into jobs. While there is no simple connection between changes in unemployment and employment — a fall in one does not necessarily lead to a rise in the other — there is a relationship. When both sets of figures behave oddly, as they have until relatively recently, with unemployment falling but employment stubbornly refusing to rise, statisticians, economists and analysts tend to become nervous.

Those outside the Government — and some inside it — will not be made less

nervous by some revisions to the main series of employment figures, also announced yesterday. Instead of saying that the workforce in employment (WIE) series, an employer-based survey measure, rose 90,000 in the quarter to June, they said it rose 98,000. And instead of saying employment in the final quarter of last year went up 36,000, they now say it rose 166,000.

Such changes — while statistically explicable and taking the WIE series a bit nearer the household-based Labour Force Survey series, which has been showing much higher employment growth — do nothing to lessen public confusion about, nor increase confidence in, the official totals. When they are coupled with a productivity slump — new figures yesterday showed the worst fall since the 1981 recession — alarm bells may start ringing.

Whitehall economists accept that the precise pace of jobs growth is uncertain, but maintain it is strong — although it is nothing like the huge boost in jobs which helped President Clinton to his election victory in the US last week.

But it is enough to allow ministers to claim, as Mr Heseltine did yesterday, that "Britain is on the move" over jobs. Yesterday's breakthrough below the unadjusted two million barrier, together with the other figures in the raft of labour market data, will provide strong ammunition for Mrs Shepherd in Paris today to defend the Government's decision to apply pressure on the EU intergovernmental conference over the 48-hour working time directive.

But if you're still unemployed in spite of the drop, being one side or the other of the two million barrier doesn't make a whole lot of difference. In the political and economic arguments over unemployment, there is only one point on which all sides agree: no matter how far or how fast it has come down, unemployment is still too high.

There's no simple connection — fall in unemployment does not always signify a rise in employment

Jonathan Prynn on the woes of the biggest fast-food chain

Wall St loses taste for McDonald's

There are few more potent emblems of the relentless global march of American culture than the Golden Arches of McDonald's. Since its birth in the early 1950s the company has opened restaurants in 96 countries, changing the eating habits of generations of children.

Last month saw new branches in Delhi and Lima. Others in even more exotic locations are sure to follow. One day, there will probably be a McDonald's on the moon.

And yet there is one place on Earth where Ronald McDonald, with his ubiquitous mascot of Big Macs and Quarter Pounders, is failing to satisfy — Wall Street. For McDonald's, one of the most disciplined and well-organised companies in the history of capitalism, is under fierce attack in its own backyard.



Hard to swallow: McDonald's is not finding it easy coming to terms with disappointing results

analysts suspect halting or paring down the opening programme makes financial sense but will not be considered by a company unused to admissions of failure or downgrading of profit forecasts.

The second challenge facing McDonald's is the ageing of the customer base that fuelled growth in the 1970s and 1980s. The suburban teenagers who grazed on Quarter Pounders 20 or more years ago are now wealthy, middle-aged professionals who try to wean their children off such a diet as fast as possible. At the same time, competitors such as Wendy's have been launching their own lines of highly successful upmarket burgers that have scored well with American kids and their parents.

In a recent quality survey, McDonald's burgers were rated twelfth out of 13, with Wendy's second and Burger King eighth. To tempt back the baby-boomers, McDonald's launched in May the Arch Deluxe, its "sophisticated" adult burger. Then last month came Crispy Chicken Deluxe, Grilled Chicken Deluxe, and Fish Fillet Deluxe.

McDonald's two-year search for a new upmarket image at an estimated cost of \$200 million on marketing alone is already the stuff of corporate legend. To develop the new lines, the company hired Andrew Selbaggio, one of Chicago's best known chefs, who proclaimed: "I want people to realise we are not a factory, we are a restaurant."

Hundreds of new mustards and mayonnaises were tested and dozens of types of fish for the Fish Fillet Deluxe. At the glitzy launch of the Arch Deluxe, employees performed special dance steps to mark the occasion. And yet by McDonald's exacting standards the new range has been a monumental flop. Sales from US restaurants, excluding new openings, have not risen in a single month since May and customers seem reluctant to pay \$2.49 for a "sophisticated" burger when they can have a vulgar one for 99 cents.

McDonald's says that sales have exceeded internal (and undisclosed) expectations and that the new range was never meant to be a magic formula.

Perhaps so, but at the very least the episode has confirmed impressions that the company's high command has begun to lose its once unquestioned touch. Particular scorn is reserved for the advertisements for the adult burgers, which show a child with a grumpy face — an image of unhappiness that

would have been regarded as heresy until recently. Although international sales have shown far healthier growth, many of McDonald's main overseas markets — Japan, Germany and Britain for example — are not as strong as they could be for a variety of reasons.

Workers at table are nothing to fear

From the General Secretary, Manufacturing Science Finance

Sir, I am sorry to read that the CBI is playing the same old sad tune in its report *Boards without Ties*.

In the light of its failure to bring all of industry on board following Cadbury, not to mention Hempel, the CBI should now be clear that voluntarism will not work. Britain's business needs a framework of corporate governance that embraces the different stakeholders, and there will need to be legislation to back it up.

As for the idea of two-tier

boards, I really cannot understand what the CBI is afraid of. Lots of other European economies manage to prosper with workers on the board, so why shouldn't we?

Now that Hallowe'en, over for this year, perhaps the CBI could put on one of the false spectre of workers at the table and replace with a dose of commonsense social partnership. I am sure we would all be better off as a result.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER LYONS,
MSF Centre,
33-37 Moreland Street, EC

No equity for the small investor who pays tax twice

From Mr C. Stephenson

Sir, In 1994 I subscribed, out of my personal savings taxed at the highest rate, to a Rights Issue of ordinary shares in Reckitt & Coleman. The company now proposes to return funds to shareholders by paying a special foreign income dividend (FID). This carries no tax credit and is treated as a gross payment reduced by income tax at the lower rate, although individuals paying tax at the higher rate will pay tax at the higher rate on the grossed-up FID. This taxes my original savings twice and is manifestly unfair on the small private investor. Where is the equity in that?

Yours faithfully,
C. STEPHENSON,
1 Broadford Road,
Knowle, Solihull,
West Midlands.

Money from sell-off should have gone into rail enterprise

From Dr D. G. Guild

Sir, It is perhaps not surprising that ministers turn down a proposal by the franchising director (Spencer) to allow critics to see the profits arising out of privatisation should be shared between the rail operator and the taxpayer. After all, the aim of the operation was to bring money into Treasury's coffers by selling cheap to get a buyer.

The idea did have some merit, yet one would have liked to see a proportion of the money being invested in the enterprise. And that it would have been fixed part of the contract. The have been instances of reward of the transfer of reward of new private owners, but genuine risk-taking has been less in evidence.

And one can only go along with Sir John Bourn, Comptroller and Auditor General, when he criticises the failure to set specific limits on the firms involved in the sell-off. For the Treasury had suggested that firms should be set. Moreover it has often seemed that the taxpayer has gained little if anything from the activities of companies for these have added nothing to the value of assets. Much better to have spent this money on the system itself, which has been suffering seriously from under-investment, particularly in the period leading up to privatisation.

Unfortunately the advice the rail franchising director can be safely ignored when it is not in line with the Government's agenda. And they do not need to act either on criticism of the NAO.

Yours faithfully,
D. G. GUILD,
53 Grange Road,
Edinburgh.

Letters to the Business section can be sent by fax on 0171-782 5112.

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34 UNIT TRUST PRICES

[illegible]

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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		1986		Price		Mkt M		Circul		1986		Price		Mkt M	
		High	Low	Stock	±	±	±	±	±	High	Low	Stock	±	±	±
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
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186	121	Robert Smith	125	3	145	62	3	EW Fritz	60	0	3.4
187	122	Robert Smith	125	3	145	62	3	EW Fritz	60	0	3.4
188	123	Robert Smith	125	3	145	62	3	EW Fritz	60	0	3.4
189	124	Robert Smith	125	3	145	62	3	EW Fritz	60	0	3.4
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217	152	Robert Smith	125	3	145	62	3	EW Fritz	60	0	3.4
218	153	Robert Smith	125	3	145	62	3	EW Fritz	60	0	3.4
219	154	Robert Smith	125	3	145	62	3	EW Fritz	60	0	3.4
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229	164	Robert Smith	125	3	145	62	3	EW Fritz	60	0	3.4
230	165	Robert Smith	125	3	145	62	3	EW Fritz	60	0	3

PROPERTY									
74	31	Alfred Land	89	14	73	120			
304%	313	Adrian	100		29	23			
4.2	317	Adrian East	160%						
4.2	318	Adrian East	160%		21	26.0			
4.2	319	Adrian East	160%						
4.2	320	Adrian East	160%						
4.2	321	Adrian East	160%						
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RETAILERS GENERAL

WATER

100% Pure Water

100% Pure Water

100% Pure Water

100% Pure Water

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Tony Dawe reports on the growing success of the consultancy industry, which in the past year has earned record fees overseas

British experts bring home the billions

British consultants could feel pleased with themselves when they sat down to their yearly awards lunch yesterday after the annual meeting of the British Consultants' Bureau, which promotes their work abroad. As the Duke of Gloucester, himself an architect specialising in consultancy, handed out the prizes, the members of the bureau could reflect on some stunning statistics.

In the past year they have earned a record £2 billion in overseas fees, equal, for example, to one fifth of the earnings of the British defence industry. Last month alone, 52 overseas projects and assignments were won by BCB members. Engineering continues to provide the backbone of British expertise abroad but there has also been significant growth in



The Duke of Gloucester during his mission to Hanoi

"niche disciplines" such as healthcare, higher education and tourism.

"British consultancy is one of the areas of invisible earnings which has been a success

story for the past century: where we have always managed to keep ourselves in the highest echelon," says Colin Adams, director of the bureau. "People abroad find it easy to

get on with British consultants and admire their integrity and total independence.

"Sometimes ministers and civil servants suggest that we are not promoting British products sufficiently, but one of the reasons that agencies abroad will choose a British consultant is because they know he or she will give not just the best but also the most independent advice."

He identified a trend among consultants to move away from advising on infrastructure projects to strengthening institutions abroad, and encouraging local agencies and companies to help themselves.

While leading firms continue to advise on airport, bridge and tunnel projects, Mr Adams cited consultancies which offer less visible support. London Economics has won contracts to advise European companies on how to comply with EC regulations. Gimlet is advising the Commission on how to apply its own rules and KBC is providing software for modernising oil refineries to several companies abroad.

"The question now is how do we defend our position," says Mr Adams. "The answer is to become more specialised and for firms to keep at the leading edge of consultancy. We at the bureau can train people how to prepare a good proposal, but it is the firms themselves which have to realise they must keep their research up to date and employ the highest quality people."

The bureau has appointed Gill Monaghan as its first chairwoman. She heads Unecia, the Universities of England Consultancy for International Activities, which was formed to provide quality assistance and research for development aid projects. Ms Monaghan will chair an organisation which is being



In the basket: research shows that South-East and East Asia are growing areas for marketing British expertise

streamlined to meet the demands of the 21st century. Created 30 years ago by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Association of Consulting Engineers to promote the work of British consultants abroad, it is now welcoming multinational consultancies, which will bring revenue into Britain.

Market research shows members would like to see the bureau concentrate on South-East and East Asia. Last year British companies earned an estimated £917 million worth of consultancy fees in the region. Among new projects designed to tap this market is Action Japan, set up by the Trade Department to improve business between the two

countries. Nick Khosla, an export promoter seconded to the project from One Arup, says that Japan's overseas development aid is the world's largest at £7 billion a year, and provides opportunities for British consultants, contractors and suppliers.

"Japan's aid programme was tied to running contracts for Japanese companies a decade ago, but now its economy is much stronger the Government is under pressure to reduce its trade surplus and is expanding overseas development aid," he says.

"Part of that aid is a technical co-operation programme supporting development studies. Japanese consultants must be in the majority, but up to 30 per cent of the work can be undertaken by foreign consultants."

Mission flies a winning flag

Consulting firms which took part in last month's British Consultants' Bureau mission to Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia — led by the Duke of Gloucester — returned highly optimistic at the prospect of winning substantial new business. Colin Adams writes.

Consistency is an unsung area of invisible earnings, in which British companies traditionally excel worldwide. The Asia Pacific region continues to be the most successful market for all sectors. Latest figures for the awarding of consultancy contracts by the Asian Development Bank put UK firms in a commanding position. So why bother with missions?

The competition today to win projects is becoming fiercer. The key elements to winning work are state-of-the-art expertise, international experience, local associates, decision-makers well disposed to the UK, early identification of projects, funding and patience. Many of these require a presence on the ground.

Vietnam is a market with enormous potential. Within the next five years it is expected to receive substantial investment. Although many BCB member firms are already working in Vietnam, their objective in taking part in a mission was to consolidate good relations and contacts. Britain is currently highly regarded by the Vietnamese as one of their principal supporters in Europe.

The Duke of Gloucester, a veteran of some 20 years of BCB missions, provides the key to access to the most senior levels of government. He has also been the catalyst for many BCB members to win projects.

In Hanoi, the mission was warmly received and seminars were attended by more than 200 people, many concerned with transport, ports, power and water.

Saigon proved equally fruitful. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with their newly-formed "Vietnam-ese Consultancy Association", which has been modelled on BCB, the object being to provide assistance and develop collaboration in Vietnam itself, and for work together in neighbouring countries.

It was possible for consultants to visit Hue and Da Nang in the middle of the country. This region is planning major port, tunnel and highway construction.

The Philippines is another exciting market. The country is now in a period of expansion which, with careful management, should experience growth comparable to that of Malaysia and Indonesia. President Ramos briefed the mission on his plans for the future. He was enthusiastic about the British consultants and the part they could play.

Many consultants developed partnerships for projects during the mission. The final leg of the mission in Indonesia was equally successful.

© The author is director of the British Consultants' Bureau.

The best recommendation we can give you to join the British Consultants Bureau? Our members' successes.

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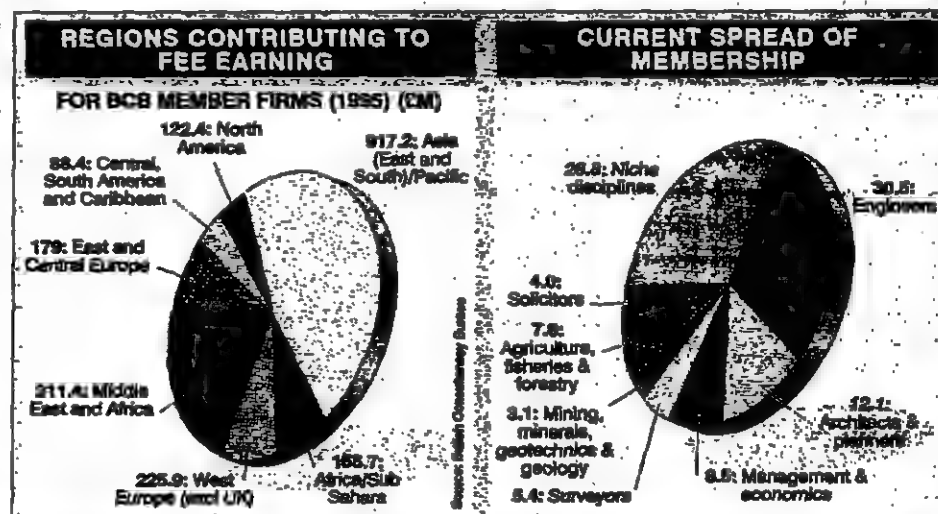
- 260 member companies and individual consultants earned c.£2 billion worth of consultancy fees, worldwide.
- Members worked in every country in the world, bar two.
- BCB's London office carefully allocated many hundreds of overseas enquiries from public and private sector organisations; matching consultancy skills and experience with the selection criteria.
- The Bureau's directors and staff helped member firms obtain substantive, high level contacts in the course of several BCB international missions and during the visits of VIPs to BCB.
- Regular meetings took place with UK and overseas ministers and ambassadors, with the World Bank, ADB, representatives from the EU, the EBRD, the FCO, DTI and ODA.
- BCB's training resources assisted members in the techniques of proposal writing and successfully winning consultancy contracts.

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Rodney Hobson salutes award-winners and top teams

THE SWITCH of former Soviet Union countries to a market economy has brought opportunities for British consultants to push the process along.

The three nominations in the category for less visible projects involved education in Kazakhstan, electricity in Ukraine and energy in the St Petersburg region of Russia.

The creation of a more attractive energy sector for international investors and finance institutions has been created in the St Petersburg region by Environmental Resources Management (ERM), a London consultancy that has won the Queen's Award for Export three times and now the consultancy

of the year for invisible projects. In Ukraine, a World Bank study recommended an energy pool system similar to that in the UK with one company operating and maintaining the grid while distribution was controlled by local electricity companies. Mott Ewbank Preece, working with the main consultant, Coopers & Lybrand, was awarded the contract.

A highly developed system of higher education in Kazakhstan was going through a cash crisis. UNECA of Sheffield and its German partners Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst helped it to adapt to operate efficiently and effectively in a market economy.



A busy Shanghai; traffic in China, Vietnam, Malaysia and India is projected to double in five years

RUSSIA'S largest single export earner is being upgraded, thanks to help from Hardcastle & Company. The London firm was among 12 Western and two Russian consultancies working on an independent appraisal of the main Russian gas pipeline.

Gazprom, the Russian national gas company, earns more than £10 billion in much needed hard currency for Russia. It is also an important source of energy for Western Europe.

Clive Hardcastle, managing director of Hardcastle, says: "Unless people in the UK are close to Gazprom's management and understand the Russian

industry, we as a country will lose out to our competitors."

That perseverance won for Hardcastle the title small consultancy of the year for invisible projects.

● A crucial stage in the transition of South Africa was the holding of local government elections following national elections. Vital help was provided by a technical resource group from 13 Commonwealth nations.

Solace International, of Pontefract, West Yorkshire, provided administrative support for the team, recruited 20 individuals from the UK and deployed the project management expertise.

IN THE Asia-Pacific region road accidents result in more than 235,000 deaths a year and the figure will, it is estimated, rise to 450,000 within ten years unless urgent action is taken. Accidents in the region cost £15 billion a year.

Vehicles will double in five years in countries such as India, China, Vietnam and Malaysia where the annual growth in traffic is more than 15 per cent.

For the past two years Ross Silcock, a small consultancy in

Newcastle upon Tyne, has been working with the Asian Development Bank to review road safety in 34 countries and develop strategies for improving it.

● In Peru, under a World Bank programme, a five-year road safety scheme was implemented, including road engineering, traffic policing, testing and training drivers.

● In Fiji, where roads have been improved to cope with extra traffic, issues tackled under an action plan included collecting accident data and traffic law enforcement. Children now receive road safety education, drivers are tested more stringently and vehicles are examined for roadworthiness.

● In Africa, the Ghanaian Government invited Ross Silcock back to advise on a second road safety plan after the success of the first plan in 1991.

SHANGHAI BEATING POLLUTION

A £300 million project is under way in Shanghai to improve water supplies and control pollution. It is one of the largest schemes of its kind in the world and it has won for Michael Burley, a Mott MacDonald director, the title of consultant of the year for visible projects.

Mr Burley has led the company's extensive work in Shanghai and was awarded the Baiyulan Prize by the Shanghai Municipal Government, its highest honour for foreign friends.

● Jamaica's Ministry of Health is in the middle of an ambitious hospital rationalisation and David Carter is Mott MacDonald's project leader. The first phase focuses on constructing

one new hospital and substantially renovating five existing ones around the island.

Mott MacDonald was appointed in a joint venture with Llewellyn-Davies to provide technical assistance and project management support.

● The opening of the second Severn crossing to traffic in June marked the culmination of a four-year construction programme for the £330 million privately-financed project.

Renowned for its strong winds and unpredictable currents, the Severn estuary presented an enormous challenge to the design team and contractor, led by David Mizon, Halcrow's project manager.

RESEARCH INTO ACTIVITY CHECKUP

THE effects of the Chernobyl nuclear power station disaster are still being felt ten years later. The economies of Belarus and Ukraine have seen large areas of land subjected to severe constraints on their use for agriculture, forestry and recreation.

Peter Coughtrey of LG Mouchell & Partners, based at West Byfleet, Surrey, was responsible for a project to improve the monitoring and controlling of radioactive contamination of food in areas of Belarus affected by the disaster.

Dr Coughtrey's work, which won him the individual award for less visible projects, also

included helping the Ukrainian authorities to develop strategies for reducing radioactive contamination of milk in the area and monitoring exports of food to the European Union.

● Dr Michael Burstall of Remit Consultants was project manager for a study on improving access to European markets for 13 American pharmaceutical companies. One by-product was to make the Americans aware of the attractiveness of the UK as a location for investment.

The study focused on the benefits and importance to the UK economy of the research-based pharmaceutical sector.

A COMBINED power and desalination plant at Dubai, built to meet the rising demand for power and water in the Middle East state, has won the award for visible projects.

The Dubai Electricity and Water Authority approached Ewbank Preece, now Mott Ewbank Preece, to review forecasts of demand. The consultancy suggested a power and water plant on the coast about 18 miles from Dubai

City and close to the port of Jebel Ali, where the authority had a similar plant.

The new station can generate 456 megawatts using natural gas and can produce 272,800 cubic metres of water a day.

● The German A4 autobahn can now carry twice as many vehicles across the Rhine

thanks to a unique widening scheme on the Rodenkirchen bridge three miles south of Cologne. For the first time, a suspension bridge has been widened by adding a third cable. The project had to be carried out without the bridge being closed.

Rendel Palmer & Triton, part of the High-Point Rendel

group, took up the challenge as consulting engineers. To keep traffic moving, the new bridge was constructed, connected to the existing construction, then the old bridge was closed while the old road deck was replaced. The widened bridge can now carry six lanes of traffic.

● Safety from the storms and tidal surges that batter the coastline of Bangladesh has been provided for 250,000 people in 207 of the worst-affected locations, thanks to a project involving O'Sullivan & Graham. An extra benefit has been that the shelters were designed to double up as schools. The project was the outcome of one of the worst storms this century, when 140,000 lives were lost in 1991.

O'Sullivan & Graham, based at Shinfield, Berkshire, and Iberinsa of Spain, were appointed by the Commission of European Communities to help with an £18 million project to build 200 shelters- cum-primary schools in the most vulnerable areas.

Within four months, 15 shelters were under construction. Rooms at first-floor level were placed 15 feet above the ground while an additional refuge was added at roof level. An elevated plinth at ground level can save cattle in times of more moderate tidal surges.

● One of the largest combined-cycle power stations in the world has been built at Black Point on the western edge of the New Territories, Hong Kong. Using gas piped from the Yacheng field in the South China sea off Hainan Island, it feeds the electricity transmission system in Hong Kong and, after upgrading, will also serve Guangdong province in China.

LG Mouchell and Partners have been involved since 1989, carrying out studies on possible sites before providing civil, structural, architectural and building services for the first phase of the development. The first power was generated earlier this year.



Double win for Mott MacDonald

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British Consultancy Firm of the Year

Our success as one of Britain's top exporters of engineering consultancy owes much to the dedication and skills of our staff world-wide. So we are delighted that Michael Burley's contribution to Shanghai's environmental programme has been recognised by an award for British Individual Consultant of the Year — the fourth time in five years that a Mott MacDonald engineer has won this accolade.

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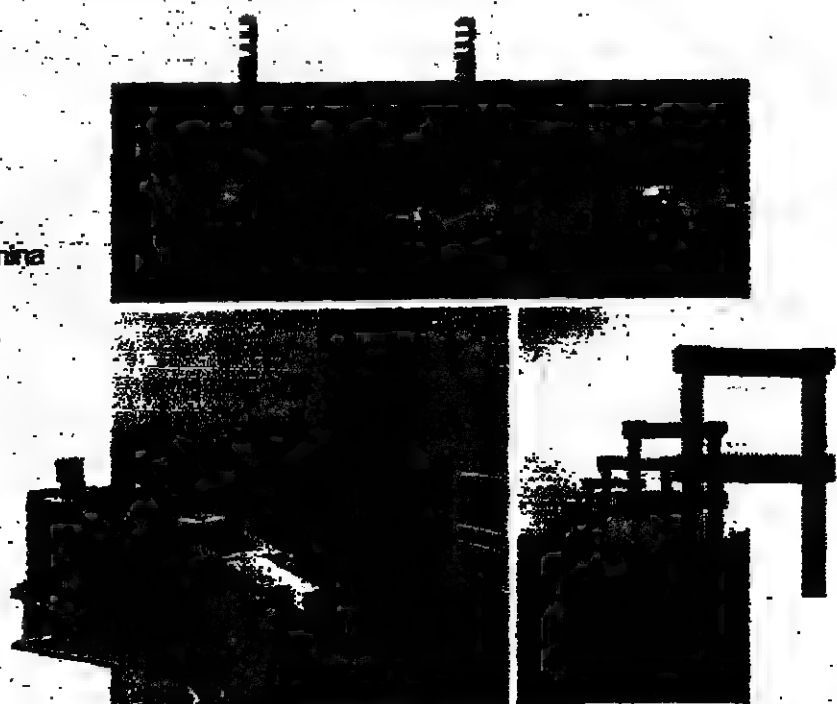
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Bargains of the week — from a fortnight in the Algarve to a nine-day tour of Morocco over Christmas

HOLIDAYS

EXPLORING Florida by car for a week, then cruising the Caribbean for the next seven days for £699 a person is the latest package on offer from The Cruise Line with flights from Gatwick on the next three Mondays. Details: 01273 835252.

CYPRUS for a week for £219 on a Thomson holiday with a flight from Gatwick next Tuesday and bed and breakfast accommodation is among late offers from Lunn Poly. Details from the company's 800 Holiday Shops.

A GREEK evening, walking tour of Oxford and wine-tasting are included in a gourmet weekend for singles over 30 based at the Bear Hotel, Hungerford, Wiltshire, from November 22 to 24. The price from Lasting Impressions Holidays is £159 a person. Details: 0161-436 0513.

THE ALGARVE for £140 for a fortnight in self-catering accommodation with a flight from Gatwick on November 23 is included in late offers from Cosmos. Details: 0161-480 5799.

SKIING in Turkey is one of the new breaks offered by Dolunay Holidays. Prices start from £589 a person for a week's full-board accommodation and ski pass at the Uludağ resort, plus return flights. Details: 01452 501978.

DUBAI Christmas shopping trips are on offer from Amathus Holidays for £395 for two nights with a flight from Gatwick on Saturdays or £439 for three nights and a

flight on Fridays. Details: 0171-636 9873.

ELAT at cut prices next month is on offer from Pel-tours. A week's bed and breakfast and return flights cost from £299 a person. Departures from Heathrow, Manchester and Luton on several dates between December 1 and 16. Details: 0181-343 0590.

KENYA for a fortnight over Christmas is available for £749 a person with Holiday Packages, with a flight from Gatwick on December 15 and half-board accommodation at the four-star Traveller's Beach Hotel. Details: 0171-435 8071.

ESCAPE Christmas in Britain on a nine-day Travelbag Adventures tour of Morocco, with a flight from Heathrow on December 21. The price for the tour, which includes mountains, the coast and Marrakech and bed-and-breakfast hotel accommodation, is from £565 a person. Details: 01420 541007.

NEW YEAR'S Eve overlooking the Niagara Falls with a fireworks and laser show forms part of a three-night package from Travelplanners, which also includes two nights in Toronto and sightseeing trips. The price, if booked before November 30, is £474 a person. Details: 0181-559 7760.

BUDAPEST in a spa hotel over new year is on offer from Thermalia Travel for £399 a person, with a flight from Heathrow on December 30 and three nights' accommodation and evening meals. Details: 0171-483 1848.



A fireworks and laser show on New Year's Eve at Niagara Falls is part of a three-night £474 package to Canada.

FLIGHTS

CUT-PRICE fares to Brussels and beyond are being offered by Virgin Express. The no-frills airline charges £32 one-way between Heathrow and Brussels. Connecting flights between London and Madrid, Rome, Milan, Vienna, Nice, Copenhagen or Barcelona cost a flat £75. Details: 0800 891199.

FARES have tumbled between London and Inverness. Air UK (0345 666777) which flies out of Stansted in Essex has return fares of £59 for midweek and £69 for weekend flights. Easyjet (0990 292929), flying from Luton, costs £29 one way and £58 return for its service, which begins on November 22.

THE Flemish airline VLM operates five flights a day between London City and Rotterdam and charges £85 for a

return excursion free of Saturday-night-stay restrictions. Details: 0171-476 6677.

AIR Namibia has a special £199 one-way fare between Heathrow and Windhoek, Cape Town or Johannesburg on selected dates during November and December. Details: 0181-944 6181.

BRITISH Airways has lowered its US Excursion fares. Book by today and depart before December 12 and BA will charge £205 to selected East Coast and £269 to selected West Coast destinations. Details: 0345 222111.

DENMARK'S Maersk Air has a £120 supersaver excursion between Gatwick and Copenhagen with flights to Billund priced at £140. Details: 0171-333 0066.

P&O EUROPEAN Ferries has packages to Disneyland Paris from £67 a person until December 17. The price is based on two adults and two children travelling in one car and staying three nights (Sunday to Tuesday) at the Davy Crockett ranch. A one-day park pass is included. Details: 01932-45605.

CHEAP but restricted day trips are available with Le Shuttle from £29, Monday to Thursday (£39 weekends). The same prices apply to an overnight ticket (travel out after midnight, return before 4pm next day). Details from Eurodrive: 0181-324 4000.

RED Funnel has introduced a pre-Christmas five-day ticket valid until December 15 on its Southampton-Cowes route for £32, in-

cluding a car and up to four passengers. Details: 01703-334010.

THE CLUB Hotelier Calais group is offering dinner, bed and breakfast and a ferry crossing with car from £59. Details: 01892-519253.

STENA Line has a £49 return fare including ferry crossing from Harwich to the Hook of Holland and onwards by rail to Amsterdam. Children travelling with an adult go for £5. Details: 0990-455455.

IRISH Ferries has motor-ing breaks to Ireland from £63 a person to include two nights B&B staying in Irish homes or three-star hotels. The price is based on a car and four adults, valid until December 31. Details: 0990-143441.

HOTELS

A **COMPLIMENTARY** copy of the 200-page Leading Hotels of the World directory for 1997 is available. Lots of details, plus colour photographs of 308 luxury hotels in 66 countries. Details: 0800 181 123.

HOSPITALITY Hotels of Cornwall, a collection of independently run hotels, is offering five free vouchers for entry to any of Cornwall's top 12 gardens, as well as a £10 plant voucher, for guests staying on its five-night Glorious Gardens package. Prices start at £235 a person for five nights, including dinner and breakfast. Details: 01872 553655.

SIPPING sherry with the Lord Mayor of Durham is one of the attractions offered by the Royal County Hotel in Durham over Christmas. A four-night break, with extras such as a private guided tour of Durham Castle, includes lunch and dinner and costs from £345 a person. Details: 0191-386 6621.

A SAVING of almost 50 per cent is the introductory rate at the new Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Bali. Rates start at £125 (about £83 a night) for an ocean view room; until March 31 next year, after which the rate is £166. Details: 0800 224 0000.

THE Forest of Arden Marriott Hotel near Coventry in Warwickshire, has a three-night Christmas break from £299 a person, including Christmas lunch and a Swinging Sixties gala dinner dance. A one-night New Year's Eve break costs from £149 a person. Details: 01676 523335.

THE Landmark Trust has adopted a more flexible approach to off-season breaks in its 163 interesting historic buildings which are available on a self-catering basis. The average price for a weekend break for a property sleeping four to six people is just under £300. Details: 01628 825925.

STAY in the White House, an eight-room 250-year-old plantation house on the Caribbean island of St Kitts, for £75 a person a night, including breakfast. A fortnightly direct service has just been introduced by Caledonian Airways from £288 return. Details: 0800 31 71 85.

THE Berkeley Hotel in Knightsbridge has a special room rate, also offering VIP access to stores such as Harrods and Harvey Nichols. Rates, from December 15 until January 13, start at £150 a night for single occupancy (including VAT, service and breakfast) and £220 for double. Details: 0171-235 6000.

A STEAM railway trip is included in the Christmas break on offer from Golden-rail at the three-star Lion Hotel in Shrewsbury. Price for three nights based on two sharing is £255 a person, full board. Details: 0161-238 5206.

A NEW Year break at the Old Course Hotel, St Andrews, costs £99.50 a person a night, based on double occupancy, and includes a half-hour treatment in the hotel's health spa. Guests are guaranteed tea-times on the hotel's championship course. Details: 01354 474571.

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Struggling hideaways in the sun are investing manpower and money to attract big-spending travellers

Britain's holiday 'trade gap' narrows

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

BRITAIN'S tourism "trade gap" with the rest of the world is narrowing fast as high-spending Americans and Japanese set cash fills ringing in historic cities and attractions throughout the country.

The opening of the Channel Tunnel has also boosted the number of European visitors who last year spent £500 million on accommodation and shopping while they were in Britain, according to the Office for National Statistics.

Travel Trends, Whitehall's annual "snap-shot" of Britain's tourism industry, reveals that the record £4.6 billion tourism deficit of 1994 narrowed by £1 billion in 1995, falling for only the second time this decade. Early indications are that it is narrowing still further with a 12 per cent increase in visitor numbers and a 14 per cent rise in spending in the first eight months of 1996.

According to the report's editor, Guy Goodwin: "The figures very much suggest that 1995 was a turning year for tourism in this country."

The 14 per cent increase in visitors was the highest for 25 years and continued a trend that began after the Gulf War.

"What also stands out is the large number of American tourists coming to the country," says Mr Goodwin. Nearly four million crossed the Atlantic on holiday last year and spent a record £2 billion — more than a sixth of the total earnings from foreign tourists.

"The importance of the Americans to our tourism industry is not really in doubt," he says. "They come here in large numbers, they stay longer than average and they spend more than most."

The tunnel attracts 9 per cent of all Europeans who come to Britain on holiday and 4 per cent of the business market. Last year 4 per cent of British holidaymakers and 7 per cent of business travellers used the tunnel. The tunnel accounts for 7 per cent of all overseas residents and 5 per cent of UK residents going to and from this country.

Americans spent more in Britain than any other nation, but the Icelanders were the biggest spenders individually, lashing out an average of £92 a day compared with only £27 a day spent by each Eastern European.

Foreign visitors were spread throughout the country with all but Wiltshire and Cumbria recording increases last year. Foreign holidaymakers were not impressed with the Isle of Man or Cleveland, however. And although Dorset is a favourite attraction for British holidaymakers, it was visited by only 6,000 foreign businessmen last year, while 48,000 went to Devon.

TRAVEL ON SATURDAY

John Carter on the Comoros Islands

America: Chicago and Boston

Budget skiing

Cross-channel shopping

Germany: Lake Constance

Tourism in Poland

Newcomers are keen to grab a slice of tourism

By HARVEY ELLIOTT AND TONY DAWES

FROM China to Curaçao, from troubled nations like Haiti and Hungary, tourism is becoming such a vital source of income that governments are throwing tremendous resources at luring visitors away from more familiar destinations.

Representatives from "undiscovered" countries have been among the thousands of exhibitors promoting their wares at the World Travel Market which continues at Earls Court, London, today.

Long-standing rivalries have been put aside as, for example, the Caribbean islands realise that co-operation is essential if they are to attract tourists from Europe and America.

The big and successful islands of Barbados, Jamaica and Antigua are helping to build the tourism potential of tiny and undeveloped islands such as Haiti, St Eustatius and Bonaire in the hope that the entire region will benefit.

With the support of organisations such as the World Bank and the United Nations, the Caribbean Tourism Organisation, CTO, is setting up language-training schemes and a model for attracting "eco-tourists" to the islands.

As in many parts of the world, tourism is expected this year to generate more than 25 per cent of the total gross domestic product of the Caribbean and provide one in every four jobs. Worldwide, tourism is likely to generate more than 100 million new jobs in the

next ten years. Even Haiti, so long ravaged by violence and corruption, is launching a campaign to overcome its bad image and become a potentially outstanding destination for holidaymakers.

Maryse Penette, Haiti's Secretary of State for Tourism, outlined the island's "master plan" at Earls Court this week. "In about two and a half years time we will have completed our infrastructure development and be ready to receive tourists from Britain in style," she said.

The programme is based chiefly on training locals in hotel management, catering and languages and the launch of a scheme to develop small properties for independent travellers throughout the Haitian countryside.

The country's two airports are being improved and extended in a 21-month long project and plans are being drawn up to develop ports for cruise ships.

Ministers and tourist officials in Trinidad and Tobago are also hoping to develop their country as a base for cruise ships.

Brian Kuei Tung, Minister of Finance and Tourism, says: "We are hoping that tourism, which currently contributes five per cent to GDP, will grow to 25 per cent within the next five years. We have had a lot of success attracting the oil and energy sector and now we shall do the same with tourism."

"The infrastructure has

been established with a new airport and deep-water harbour in Tobago and new hotels. We are poised for take-off and are targeting several markets, including South America and the United States as well as Europe."

All 34 members of the CTO are, meanwhile, publishing a 16-page guide explaining what is on offer from the traditional favourites to the struggling newcomers.

In Indonesia the same positive approach to tourism is being adopted. "Ten years ago the tourism industry was number eight in the list of foreign currency earners," says Andi Mappi Sammeng, Director General of Tourism. "Last year it sky-rocketed to number three behind the petroleum and textile industries and by 2003 it will be the number one earner."

The country is encouraging developments across as many islands as possible, opening up new airports and routes.

"Tourism is vital because it stimulates other sectors," Mr Sammeng says. "Farmers, fruit growers and fishermen all benefit when a new hotel opens because it will need eggs, flour, fruit and fish."

Hotel groups, which were strongly represented at the exhibition, are playing their part in stimulating tourism. For example, the Shangri-La chain is developing new properties in China and Burma, and Serena Hotels, backed by the Aga Khan, are opening new lodges in Tanzania.



Haiti: the Government is planning to develop ports to attract passing cruise ships

Labour spins a tantalising web

THE NUMBER of senior figures from the travel industry who lent their names in support of Labour's "strategy for tourism and hospitality" suggests that the document really has, as its title suggests, "broken new ground".

Twenty top people, ranging from David Quarmby, the chairman of both the British Tourist Authority and the English Tourist Board, to Geoffrey Lipman, the World Travel and Tourism Council President, were wheeled out at this week's World Travel Market to "welcome" the policy document.

But even as Jack Cunningham, the Shadow Heritage Secretary, was outlining Labour's plans for using the industry to "provide major economic, social and employment opportunities for Britain", there was a feeling that little of substance existed behind the polished rhetoric.

Labour maintains that "appropriate government support in marketing and support services is needed". But that, you can be sure, will not mean more money.



The Travel Business HARVEY ELLIOTT

The Labour politicians say they want to "encourage partnerships between local authorities, tourist boards and the private sector", apparently by using travel agents to sell British as well as foreign holidays. But will this happen while the agents get a big commission from tour operators and almost nothing from domestic tourism?

Tantalisingly, Labour insists that outbound tourism "encourages inbound tourism, with every British traveller overseas effectively acting as an ambassador for their country". Naturally, this does not include soccer hooligans or lager louts, who, it says, will be turned from their antisocial behaviour by stiffer fines.

Easily the best idea is the introduction of a statutory national accommodation-grading scheme. This would sweep away the plethora of symbols used to indicate particular hotel's status, and replace them with one fashioned by Labour. A red rose, perhaps?

The most disturbing pledges were that Europe's 48-hour-working-week directive and the minimum wage would be introduced by a Labour government. The cost, says the industry, will destroy jobs and push up prices.

You had only to look around Earls Court this week, where more than 4,000 exhibitors from 135 countries were displaying their wares to realise that people will visit countries that offer the best value for money and have the prettiest countryside or seaside.

We have this in abundance in Britain, as I was reminded yet again last weekend when exploring the rolling hills north of Bridport, a part of Dorset that is how all England ought to look.

The irony is that if any government is successful in attracting "a greater share of tourists", the beauty spots that do remain will be swamped by a tide of coaches and cars.

Cypriots 'should unite to promote historical sites'

By TONY DAWES

A CHALLENGING call for Greek and Turkish tourist officials in Cyprus to combine to promote cultural holidays on the island was made in London this week.

Kenneth Hudson, director of the European Museum of the Year Award and adviser to an EU tourism aid team, says that tourists interested in seeing Cyprus's most historic sites were being cheated because they could not visit both sections of the island.

He told a top-level gathering of Greek Cypriot diplomats and travel industry executives that they should recognise that interesting places on the island were scattered — with some of the best churches, castles and prehistoric sites in the Turkish-controlled north.

"It is time to take an enormous risk, for the cultural organisations to move ahead of their political partners by linking up," Mr Hudson says. "Quality tourism contains more money than quantity but you will get nowhere in this field without being daring."

He added that similar organisations in Ireland had taken a lead and established cross-border cultural links.

Cultural tourism has been identified as one of the main areas to be developed and promoted by the Cyprus tourism revitalisation project, funded by the EU. The project was set up earlier this year to find ways of boosting the island's ailing tourist industry. A combination of the recession in Europe, continuing differences between the

two sides of the island and overdevelopment of some resorts has led to a drop in visitors and the money they bring into the country.

The EU team, in conjunction with local tourism officials, has agreed that action is needed to promote Cyprus in new markets to compensate for the decline particularly in British visitors.

"The existing sun, sand and

sea product will have to be extended and new products developed to attract a wider variety of visitor," says Alistair Somerville Ford, chief executive of the Institute of Commercial Management, which is participating in the project. "Cultural tourism, special-interest tourism and agrotourism have been nominated as three areas which could be developed."



The Tombs of the Kings at Paphos are a popular spot

Eurostar launches loyalty scheme

EUROSTAR yesterday launched its own version of a frequent traveller scheme to compete with airlines. The campaign is geared at keeping the growing number of business travellers, using Eurostar to Paris and Brussels, with promises of free travel, flights and other rewards.

The rail service has been planning its response to airline schemes for over a year and has copied the carriers in having three classes of card — blue, silver and gold.

The level of card depends on frequency of travel. The higher the card, the more benefits are available, such as free travel insurance, lounge access and free car parking at Ashford for gold holders. Points are then earned by travelling on Eurostar, staying in one of three hotel chains, hiring a car with Avis or using a Global One international phone card.

In return, travellers can use their accumulated points either on Eurostar or with 18 partner companies. A Business First return ticket, costing £265, earns 200 points. Five hundred points can be redeemed for a standard Eurostar return.

Meanwhile, Virgin Holidays has teamed up with Eurostar to launch Virgin StarTrain, linking its holiday programmes with the rail operator's scheduled trains. Prices start from £99 on a day trip to Lille, Brussels or Paris which include return train fare on Eurostar and lunch.

French Concorde fails Ronay test

By ROBIN YOUNG

FLYING Concorde across the Atlantic can mean two very different standards of service, according to Egon Ronay, the hotel and restaurant critic.

Mr Ronay paid for two trips, one in the French Concorde from Paris to New York and the other returning by British Concorde from New York to London.

The result of the comparison, he said yesterday, was: "British Airways' Concorde service is far superior to that of Air France. The BA Concorde oozed luxury, refinement and a genuine concern for passengers' well-being. The French Concorde should droop its nose in shame."

Mr Ronay's tale of two Concordes is revealed with today's launch of Egon Ronay Alert, an Internet-based public voice of The Egon Ronay Inner Circle, a new action group he has founded for international travellers.

He said: "I am declaring war on poor services on behalf of top international travellers who pay more and, therefore, are entitled to better services. Egon Ronay Alert will reveal the good and expose the bad. There is now no hiding place for those providing sub-standard services."

In his first report on the French and British Concordes, he compares most aspects of

France's Concorde services very unfavourably with those of British Airways.

Of services on the French Concorde, he asks: "Where have all the truffles, caviare, foie gras gone? Have the French lost all their taste for luxury, even at well over £5,000 per return flight?" He described Air France's on-board meal as "forgettable", and its Concorde lounge at Charles de Gaulle airport a "disappointing mediocrity".

He adds: "The service, which was reasonably efficient, lacked the real caring one should have felt, or sincere friendliness or natural kindness. Even its Concorde lounge was almost tawdry. The head of cabin staff should be relegated to the ranks, and the chief relegated to the kitchen sink."

By contrast, BA's lounge at New York's Kennedy Airport was "palatial, supremely comfortable, decorated with relaxed taste," he says.

"The lounge staff could not have been better. The flight attendants also seemed truly pleased to see the passengers, and the amount of attention was almost embarrassing. The main course was the best I have had on an airline."

Egon Ronay Alert is on the Internet at <http://www.egonronay.info.com>

Australian visa revolution

By STEVE KEENAN

BRITISH holidaymakers to Australia will be issued with electronic visas from next month in a breakthrough development which could be copied by UK immigration officials.

From December 16, eight UK travel agents and four airlines will be able to have visa applications approved within seconds instead of a paper process which can take three weeks.

Three other countries — two in the Far East and one in the Middle East — already want to copy the system for their own border controls.

And a meeting between Australian immigration officials, the system suppliers and the British Foreign Office was taking place this week to discuss progress.

The system allows agents

and airlines to tap in basic passenger information such as passport number, name and birthdate and receive an authorised visa back from Australia within an average of eight seconds.

On arrival in Australia, it is estimated the process to clear immigration will take 50 seconds.

The initiative has been promoted by the Australian Government, which wants most "normal" holiday and business visas to be electronically processed within two years.

The UK is the first country in Europe to go on-line following the USA, Singapore and Japan. There were nearly 350,000 UK visitors to Australia last year.

Manchester-based Australian Consulate consul Hamish Lindsay says: "Australia has

the best run immigration system in the world, with most people arriving into controlled areas. It is easy to control who arrives and this continues the process."

It is estimated the system will cover 92 per cent of visa applications. But while Virgin, Qantas, Air New Zealand and Singapore have signed up for the scheme, British Airways is lagging behind.

Now talks are going on with worldwide reservation systems to roll out the electronic facility to all travel agents. At present, only eight major agencies with suitable telecommunications can take advantage of the system.

But it is expected that travel agents will drop or reduce their "processing" fees as more companies offer the service and competition increases.

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VIDEOS 1

You'll believe a pig can talk: the delightful *Babe* brings Dick King-Smith's tale to animated life



VIDEOS 2

Anthony Hopkins directs and stars in *August*, which relocates a Chekhov play in 19th-century Wales

THE TIMES ARTS



VIDEOS 3

Suppressed in the Sixties, the Rolling Stones' TV show, *Rock and Roll Circus*, hits the small screen



POP

Shawn Colvin displays ever more impressive songwriting skills in a fine London gig

"A SUPERB FILM"

— Barry Norman, BBC FILM '96

"Packed with excellent performances. Liam Neeson's stunningly good performance is quite the best of his career."

— Barry Norman, BBC FILM '96

"DYNAMIC...ENGROSSING"

among the best we're likely to see this year."

— Philip French, THE OBSERVER

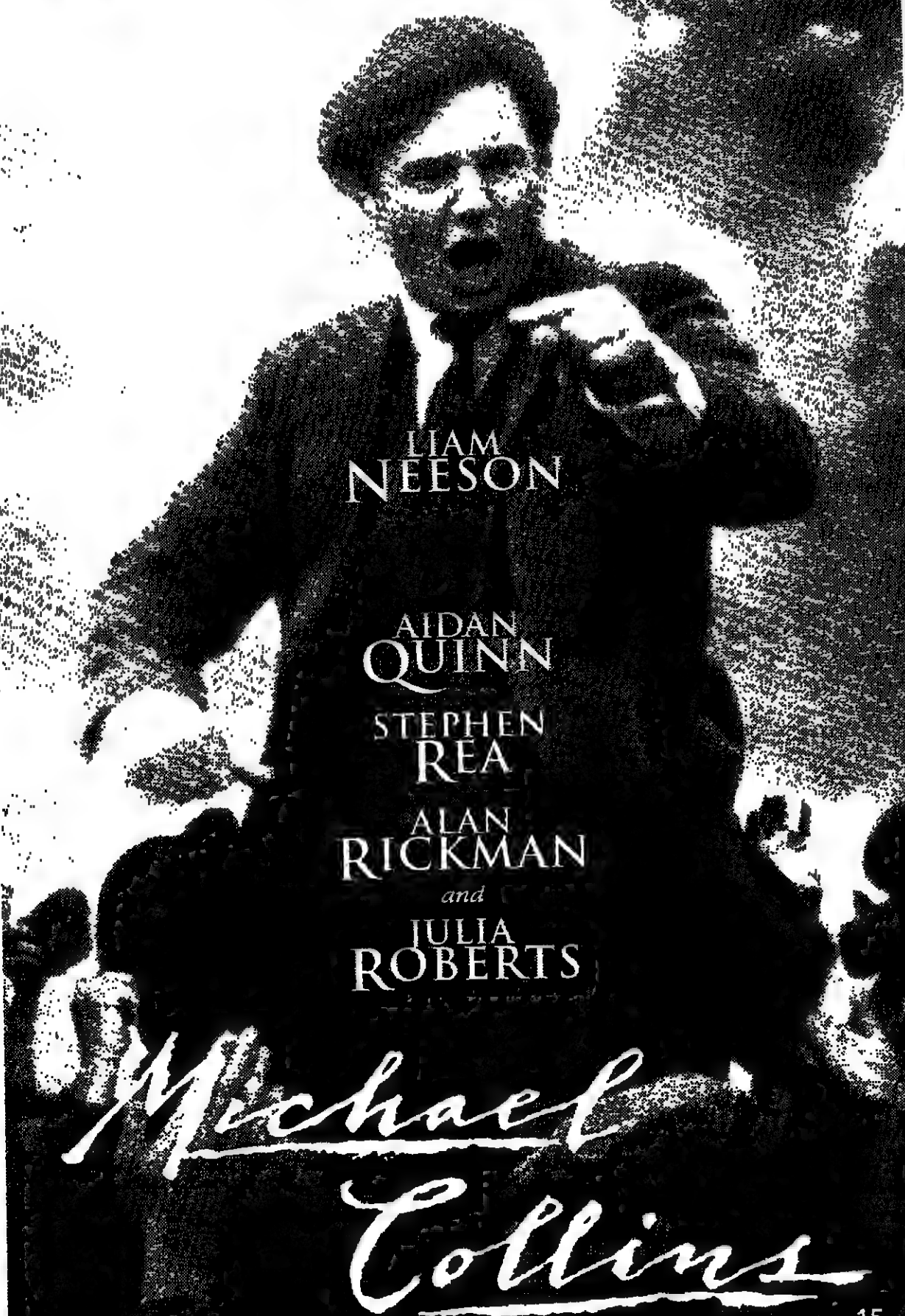
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that's full of action and adventure"

— Jonathan Ross, NEWS OF THE WORLD



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Bringing home the bacon: Chris Noonan's "fresh and intelligent" *Babe* balances sentiment with self-mockery

Christmas crackling

BABE

CIC, U, 1995

THE BEST family film in a long age is now for sale in good time for Christmas. Sentiment is balanced by self-mockery; the humour is fresh and intelligent; and director Chris Noonan, in an auspicious debut, serves up a wide range of visual treats as he tells Dick King-Smith's story about a lovable talking piglet who develops a knack for herding sheep. The animals are real, with a few animatronic ones mixed in; among the human actors, Magda Szubanski is very funny as the farmer's bemused wife.

AUGUST

Film Four, PG, 1996

THIS IS *Uncle Vanya* transported by screenwriter Julian Mitchell to a Welsh country house in the late 19th century, where Anthony Hopkins looms on a sofa one minute and capers about making animal noises the next. Since Hopkins is also the director, nobody can issue a restraining order, but at least he allows the rest of the cast — Leslie Phillips, Kate Burton, Rhian Morgan among

them — to bring out their finer points. A curate's egg; available to rent.

IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER

Columbia TriStar, 15, 1995

KENNETH BRANAGH'S manic showbiz comedy (with a few pauses for tears) charts the improbable progress of rag-tag actors rehearsing *Hamlet* in a village church at Christmas. You may laugh at the theatrical types at first; but Branagh's talent for whacking home every place of business as though we were blind or deaf soon prompts viewer exhaustion. Cheaply shot in black-and-white, the most expensive item was undoubtedly Joan Collins, cast as a high-powered agent. Available to rent.

THE ROLLING STONES

Rock and Roll Circus

PolyGram, E, 1968
PLANNED as a television special but never screened because the Stones were dissatisfied with their performance, this riotous recollection of late 1960s rock now surfaces on video. The sound is excellent, the image crisp, and the

concert out of this world. The circus setting recalls *Sergeant Pepper*, but the music goes its own way, and includes a fiery number from The Who, caterwauling from Yoko Ono, and a powerful six-pack from the Stones, who should not have worried. Directed by Michael Lindsay-Hogg, who was making *Let It Be* with the Beatles at the same time.

THINGS TO DO IN DENVER

When You're Dead

Buena Vista, 18, 1995
HIP and humane crime drama from new director Gary Fleder about a bunch of retired criminals rounded up by Andy Garcia. Artifice dominates the Colorado setting and the dialogue, but the excellent cast alone for most faults. Garcia aside, you get Christopher Walken in a wheelchair, Steve Buscemi toting a gun, Treat Williams warring with a corpse, and Jack Warden waxing philosophical from his booth in the *Trick 'n' Rich* meat shop. A rental release.

GEOFF BROWN

When Shawn Colvin released *Cover Girl* in the autumn of 1994, an album of remakes seemed a surprising blip in an upward career curve. By then, this midwestern artist had established a firm footing as a songwriter in her own right with the excellent *Steady On* and *Fai City* albums.

But listening to *A Few Small Repairs*, the new set that marks Colvin's return to her own material, you realise the fresh perspective afforded by such a diversion. Not only has she found her own voice again, it is now stronger, bolder and ready to take her to a much wider audience.

Performing here with a full band that included her long-time songwriting partner John Leventhal, Colvin was also able to emphasise the depth of her catalogue by the songs she left out: even in a longish set there was no room for the stunning ballad *I Don't Know*

Back in her own write

Shawn Colvin
Hanover Grand, WI

Why, not the first album's sublime *Shotgun Down the Avalanche*, nor indeed anything that covers album save Tom Waits's *Ol' 55*.

The evening was shaped by new songs, led off by *Sunny Come Home*, which, like much of *A Few Small Repairs*, stays true to Colvin's folk-fuelled past while adding beefier production and a fresh pop sensibility. *Get Out Of This*

House showed the same vigour, on a song that could well unlock the singles market for her. Completing an introductory trio from the new release was *You and the Mona Lisa*, as cool and slinky a modern love song as you could wish for.

Perhaps by way of reassurance, Colvin sensibly dotted her set with a few familiar numbers, such as *Diamond in the Rough* and *Round of Blues*.

During an encore that lasted almost as long as the main set, she set Leventhal the task of remembering *Tennessee*, a song he co-wrote but claimed 'impishly' never to



Colvin: ready to join the mainstream

have played. And such is her onstage aplomb, she was able to recover from losing her way entirely during *Steady On* without lasting damage. With such memories and a new portfolio, Colvin is ready to join the mainstream.

PAUL SEXTON

Transatlantic battle of the saxes

BROOKLYN-BORN saxophonist Bob Berg, like fellow tenor player Michael Brecker, is frequently used by hardcore jazz fans as a perfect example of a musician whose prodigious talents have not always found their most congenial outlet. The main target of such criticism is the fusion music Berg played in the 1980s. Such music, the argument goes, crucially lacks flexibility, forcing even the greatest players to rein their imaginations in and play well within themselves.

On the evidence provided at Ronnie Scott's by Berg and his quartet — pianist Dave Kikoski, bassist Ed Howard and drummer Gary Novak — this verdict is hard to fault. From the moment they launched into Chick Corea's *Folk Song*, and Berg began bustling through the tune's changes, feeding off the extraordinary energy and eccentric vigour of Kikoski, it was clear that Berg is driven to producing his most powerful, eloquent playing by being able to bounce his improvisational

JAZZ: Fine London gigs by Bob Berg, Tim Whitehead and Tim Garland

ideas off an equally imaginative partner free from the restrictions imposed upon soloists by the neat, even fussy, arrangements upon which much fusion depends.

Berg's empathy with his pianist is something special: Berg's is a blustering sound and the presence of an equally fluent but well-drilled soloist such as Kikoski is clearly vital.

The quartet turned in a performance of an intensity verging on the volcanic, but which, particularly in their closer, the tricky Kikoski original *E*, drew on the great strengths of acoustic post-bop jazz: a simultaneous suppleness and precision lacking in much fusion music.

SAXOPHONIST Tim Whitehead has always allowed his music to be especially open to the spirit of place. But in his current solo project, *Mine Sketches*, he has taken the

process to its logical conclusion. Choosing nine locations of personal or historical significance, from Richmond Park to the Rudston Monolith north of Hull, he has recorded a spontaneous improvisation in each which, once transcribed, serves as the core for a concert performance.

Skillfully avoiding the more obvious pitfalls of such a method at the Purcell Room, Whitehead managed to invest all his pieces with just enough specificity to conjure up their inspirations without stifling the improvisational spirit needed to spark an audience.

Utilising a folkish, keening, anthemic sound for the spiritual meditations, a bustling, bluesy stringency for the urban scenes, and a delicate echo effect to evoke the slightly eerie reverence instilled in visitors to St Agnes's Maze, Whitehead more than justified his growing reputation as one of

Britain's most thoughtful composers and improvisers.

Fellow saxophonist and composer Tim Garland restricted himself solely to the latter function in the concert's second half. *Songs of Love and Liberty*, setting two poems, Paul Eluard's *Liberty* and Pablo Neruda's *Tu Risa*, to music for accordion, guitar, bass, drums and four female voices: Christine Tobin, Monica Vasconcelos, Jacqui Dankworth and Norma Winstone. The resulting songs, sung in five languages, ranged from plaintive laments with understated Latin rhythms through jazzy scats to stirring anthems, but the work cohered because of Garland's success in infusing his music with the spirit of the poetry.

Much of the song-cycle's power derived from the intensely personal nature of the poems, but Garland managed to universalise the emotion in his subject-matter without compromising the intimacy of the music.

CHRIS PARKER



FILM 1

A star vehicle in triplicate, *The First Wives Club* soon topples from feisty comedy to daft farce



FILM 2

Brits and Yanks squabble over who sits where in the Oxford boat, as *True Blue* slowly sinks

THE TIMES ARTS



FILM 3

Chinese peasants keep dark family secrets in the superb *Day the Sun Turned Cold*



FILM 4

H.G. Wells is ill-served by Marlon Brando in a risible adaptation of *The Island of Doctor Moreau*

CINEMA: Geoff Brown ducks as three big names run riot in *The First Wives Club*

Star vehicle in hyperdrive

The first intimation that you are entering a time warp happens during the relentlessly perky animated credits. This is the way Hollywood's comedies began in the 1960s, when Doris Day and Rock Hudson got themselves into a romantic tizzy among settings of metropolitan splendour. Those films themselves looked backwards in part — to the 1930s, when comedy was regularly dressed in dinner jackets and evening gowns.

The First Wives Club is set in the 1990s and spins a different kind of plot: this is a tale about three wives out to wreak revenge on the husbands they nurtured, only to be dumped for younger models. But the film's fascination with rich people in New York, with its hotel bars, glamorous buildings, auction rooms and spacious apartments, plunks it firmly in the past.

Not that the stars have any intention of making this a museum piece. Considering the paucity of juicy parts for middle-aged ladies, who can blame Diane Keaton, Bette Midler and Goldie Hawn for attacking the script with hammer and tongue? Seen separately they can be reasonably funny; but when all three rampage at once, you'd better hide under your seat.

The trio play college chums who find a new source of camaraderie when the middle-aged blues begin. Keaton's Madison Avenue husband wants a divorce. Midler's husband, the owner of electronic stores, takes a thin blonde cashier to bed. Hawn, cast as a 1930s-style actress, is offered the mother role in her former partner's new movie. The starring role is going to his extremely young girlfriend. Such slings and arrows force the ladies to drop their rings into a champagne glass to launch the *First Wives Club* and fight back.

The director Hugh Wilson, best known for *Guarding Tess* and his TV work on *WKRP in Cincinnati*, wisely keeps his head down and lets the stars work what magic they can. Each is allowed to spoof their screen image. Hawn does it the most, strutting her body beautiful, savouring the tart lines in Robert Harling's script. But Wilson's relaxed approach does the film no favours as the comedy tips over into outright farce. An escapee on a window cleaner's gondola starts the film's slow descent into overindul-

gent silliness, while the sentimental ending utilises many of the earlier barbs gleefully thrown at the menfolk. The supporting cast puts up a good show as the trio prance about. Maggie Smith is briefly delicious as the Queen of Manhattan society. Sarah Jessica Parker gets the most from her role as the social-climbing cashier. The husbands, too, preen and suffer in some style, particularly Victor Garber. But the film would be nothing without its stars as they thrash.

The First Wives Club
Empire, PG, 102 mins
Broad comedy driven by star power

True Blue
Odeon Leicester Square
15, 118 mins
Damp drama about the University Boat Race

The Day the Sun Turned Cold
Curzon Phoenix
12, 100 mins
Spellbinding film set in rural China

The Island of Doctor Moreau
Empire, 12, 95 mins
Ridiculous adaptation of H.G. Wells

break and enter, ghost and join in a musical knot-up. Audiences beware.

Films about sporting achievements usually involve nailbiting tension, an adrenalin rush, striving, muscular bodies and roaring crowds packed together under a stadium's bright lights. Not *True Blue*, given this year's Royal Film performance on Tuesday. This is a film about the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race. It snows. It rains. The Oxford crew drive to and from practice in the club's white van. In theory there is tension galore among the team, since this is the story of the Oxford victory in 1987 when world-class Americans were forced into the crew and the dissent prompted newspaper headlines. But, unlike *Chariots of Fire*, *True Blue* never makes the characters or the issues seem important. Who cares who sits in the boat? Who cares who wins?

Rupert Walters' script, based on the memoirs of the Oxford team's coach, Dan

Topolski, endeavours to pin the drama upon different approaches to gamesmanship. The British members, led by the actor Dominic West, are amateurs at heart, full of team spirit, rowing for the honour of their university. The Americans, led by Brian McGovern, are conscious of their star status, used to better facilities and 'less autocracy' from above. 'This guy's out of his mind,' one of them cries, as Topolski — played by the Belgian actor Johan Leysen — keeps telling them what's what.

The trouble is, neither cast, nor script, nor Ferdinand Fairfax's dull direction, makes either side in the conflict worth embracing. You want thrills and spills on the river; instead you get American brats and British dullards squabbling over training tactics. Once the Americans fail to dislodge the team's president and pull out of the race, the film strengthens slightly and adopts the reliable formula of underdogs battling the odds. The Boat Race itself, held during some stirring spring weather (driving rain), generates modest excitement; and the music of Stanislas Syrewicz works overtime emulating the theme music of *Chariots of Fire*. But it all comes too late. *True Blue* is a grey, damp experience, a little film striving to be big.

The weather in *The Day the Sun Turned Cold* is not much better. Deep snowdrifts, biting cold. A violent storm erupting from nowhere on to the bleak expanse of north-eastern China. But this time the images sing with beauty, and help to crystallise the deep emotions stirred by Yun Ho's tale. This is a powerful story, based on truth, about family violence, secret love, a possible murder and the bond between mother and son.

Yim's film begins like an oriental TV police show. A young man, Guan Jian, enters a small urban police station and reports the murder of his father. The suspected murderer? His mother. Flashbacks transport us to the man's village and Yim — born in Hong Kong, trained in the 1970s at the London International Film School — begins to demonstrate a masterful control of figures in landscapes, and telling social detail.

Guan's parents are locked in an unhappy marriage. The mother finds some relief in a woodsman's arms. The father responds with his usual punishment, a vigorous beating. Subsequently he dies in agony after a meal the mother would not let her children share. Poison? It seems so; and the search for truth takes Guan and the police captain back to the crime scene.

For Western audiences, this film has many fascinating aspects. Here is peasant Chinese life unaffected by communist edicts. Here are small-town policemen, warily doing their business, much like their Western counterparts. But above everything the story and characters grip; and Yim's



Bette Midler, Goldie Hawn and Diane Keaton are cornered in *The First Wives Club*

humane regard for his sinners means that, although the temperature may be freezing, the audience never ices over.

The *Island of Doctor Moreau* was denied a press screening, which seems unfair. Film critics need a good laugh as much as anyone. And what other film in history offers the sight of Marlon Brando, caked in make-up, waving limply, carried aloft through his island population of half-human beasts on what looks like a customised Popemobile? Or Brando tickling the ivories in his nightgown, striving to educate the creatures in the difference between 12-tone music and Gershwin?

When Brando is on parade it is possible to enjoy this latest adaptation of H.G. Wells's tale as a camp entertainment. But once the island grotesques rampage and Moreau falls victim to his own creations, the film grows more nasty than silly. One can also take little pleasure in watching a good director, John Frankenheimer, crumple before an incoherent script. Or seeing David Thewlis, so good in *Naked*, lose his way in the Hollywood jungle as a stranded UN peace negotiator. 'This is the most outrageous spectacle we've ever witnessed,' he bleats at one point. Quite.

'A bit too silly'

Every week, young film fans discuss the latest releases...

THE FIRST WIVES CLUB
Ben Peters, 22: I expected to really dislike this, believing it to be another of those 'all men are rubbish' films. And it was one of those films.
Lucy Knight, 22: Fun, but not up to the hype. Perhaps a bit too silly.
Richard Wright, 20: Enjoyable, despite my mother telling me that I probably wouldn't understand it.

Holly Peters, 20: Goldie Hawn was a bit over the top, but Diane Keaton and Bette Midler were just right.
TRUE BLUE
Ben: Largely tedious; almost as boring as rowing itself.
Lucy: I suppose what kept me occupied was the 'ogle at men's muscles' factor, but that was hardly enough.
Richard: It tries to say things about Britain's relationship with America, but it should have just stuck to the action.

SNAP VERDICT

Holly: I have never watched the Boat Race in my life, and so my interest was minimal.

THE DAY THE SUN TURNED COLD
Ben: It seems that all films set in China are excellent, and this was no exception.
Lucy: One of the best things about this was the settings. The snowy landscapes set the tone for the film which, although bleak, is extremely watchable.
Richard: It took me a while to get into this — I thought it was going to be a John Woo-type film with deaths every second. Holly: A bit confusing; I would like to watch it again to appreciate it more.

Silence falls on deaf ears

RADIO: Peter Barnard says the BBC botched the two-minute tribute on Armistice Day

TWO Radio 4 listeners, both women aged about 40, were in the same car listening to *Woman's Hour* on Monday when 11am approached. They told me later that if they could not be still for the silence on Armistice Day, the next best thing was to share it with the nation via radio.

Only when the usual news bulletin was broadcast, including an item about the act of remembrance, did they realise that Radio 4 had chosen not to mark the moment at all. The BBC had decided that there would be two minutes' silence only on Radio 2 (and on BBC 1).

The interesting thing was the deduction made by both women about why Radio 2 had been chosen. They wanted the silence on all five BBC networks, but assumed that Radio 2 was now regarded within the BBC as the network that most typified the corporation's attitude to radio: "bland and unchallenging".

I do not share that view, but I do think that the BBC made a serious error on Monday. And the most worrying aspect was that the corporation appeared to have misjudged the national mood, something of which the BBC is not normally guilty.

The distasteful antics of Chris Evans on his Radio 1

Breakfast Show and the absurd dumping of *Round Britain Quiz* from Radio 4 are only two of the recent pieces of evidence cited by those who believe that BBC Radio's traditional role as the keeper of the national conscience and the bellwether of the national mood is being sacrificed to commercialism and the hunt for ratings.

This attitude exaggerates the problem, but that does not alter the fact that there is one.

'The BBC does not normally misjudge national moods'

Much of the BBC output remains of a quality commercial stations can only dream of, but there is a sense among many listeners that the centre is not holding, that traditional values come second to expediency.

Clearly the BBC was expecting trouble over the two minutes' silence and prepared its retaliation in advance. Unfortunately the form of that retaliation, which included a statement from Will Wyatt, chief executive of BBC Broadcast, that the BBC had decided "not to impose a silence" on all its listeners and viewers, was crass and insensitive.

A complete silence on every BBC network for two minutes would have been as powerful a salute to the war dead as could be imagined. Instead, the BBC botched it on Monday and in doing so the "national broadcaster" missed a chance to reinforce its position.

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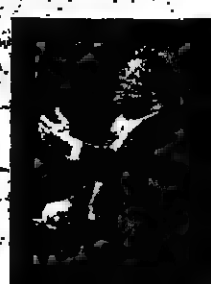
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THE TIMES
ARTS

MUSIC 3

Solti whips the
Vienna Phil
through Bartók,
but misses the
pathos of the
Pathétique



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OPERA: It's vast, noisy, and in London next week. Ian Brunskill looks forward to *Die Soldaten*

The Coliseum goes to war

The drunk is missing. So is the chap who stands at the back. One of the leading men, meanwhile, has injured himself in a fall. And the chorus can only stay till five o'clock.

On an October afternoon three weeks into rehearsal, temporary defeat threatens. Bernd Alois Zimmermann's *Soldaten*. In the largest English National Opera's rehearsal rooms in West Hampstead, Sally Jacobs's monumental set stands ready. On it, two dozen singers and actors prepare to run through one of the new production's most complicated scenes.

All of which would be fine, except that this afternoon's session is sandwiched between the dress rehearsal for *The Cunning Little Vixen*, a lunchtime costume fitting, and a performance of *La Traviata* at the Coliseum. Hence the absentees.

A week or two later everything has fallen into place, but these logistical headaches — inevitable when a major modern work enters a hard-pressed company's repertoire — help to explain why *Die Soldaten* (Soldiers) has had to wait more than 30 years for its first homegrown British staging, though a German production visited Edinburgh in 1972.

The main reason, however, is more basic. "Money," explains David Freeman, director of the ENO production that opens next week. "Other countries can afford to do it, and this country can't. English National Opera can barely afford to do it now, it's expensive, but it's being done on a shoestring compared with how it would be done anywhere else. A lot of favours have been called in."

Not that money solves all the problems. Zimmermann's demand for opera as "total theatre" would tax the richest company. "I think it's probably been done more expensively and badly quite a few times," Freeman says. Commissioned by Cologne Opera in 1958, *Die Soldaten* was rejected as "unperformable" when Zimmermann delivered it in 1960. Revised, simplified but still hugely complex, it finally had its premiere in 1965. It remains one of the most important German operas of the postwar years.

It calls for an unusually large cast of singers, actors and dancers, and an exotically augmented orchestra of more than a hundred — not to mention five conductors. There are four offstage percussion groups; one of them, with enough equipment to wage a small war, will have to be sited in a specially converted scenery store in the roof of the Coliseum and relayed through loudspeakers pointing upwards from the pit. "It gets very loud," a percussionist warns in rehearsal. He looks pleased.

Zimmermann's score owes something to the Berg of *Wozzeck*, but it



You 'terrible lot: Lance-Sergeant Tong of the Grenadier Guards drills the cast in the ENO production of Zimmermann's *Soldaten*

embraces everything from Gregorian chant to raucous jazz, from screams and explosions to sensuous lyrical singing. Film and tape are integral to the action, and there are times when several scenes are mounted simultaneously. Zimmermann imagined a "theatre of the future", where the audience might be surrounded by the drama; even on a conventional stage, the effect is bold, original, and often overwhelming in its power.

But if complexity is an essential part of the experience, Freeman and the conductor Elgar Howarth are anxious that it should not be overplayed. They approached *Die Soldaten* as the powerful music drama it is, rather than as some awesome technical challenge. "It's very easy for people to get off on the complication," Freeman suggests. "I certainly don't believe you can look at it once and understand everything. But at the same time, there isn't anything thorny happening just for effect, or just to be obfuscatory. We really have looked for clarity. Clarity, meaning and passion."

Zimmermann's material suits his

radical methods. His source is a play by 19th-century iconoclast Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz, an awkward, undervalued figure who anticipated and influenced better-known writers such as Büchner and even Brecht. At the centre of Lenz's *Soldaten* is the ruin of a respectable young woman by a feckless aristocratic officer. But the play sets that individual tragedy in a wider context, painting a vivid picture of the social damage done by licentious soldiery, or his choice of subject, and his decisive rejection of the unities of time, manner and place to which his neo-classical contemporaries adhered. Lenz offered Zimmermann an ideal basis for his own multimedial, multimedia assault on militarism.

Zimmermann's technique is one of collage. The visceral impact of the whole is what endures. But musically and dramatically — that impact relies on a mass of detail, carefully drawn and organised with precision. You have to fight your way through individual bits and hope that they fit together. Freeman says. They do fit together, if you have

an overall game plan. But if you simply try to achieve your game plan in one go, you end up with terrible generalisation. That's what the piece has suffered from.

Rehearsing the first of the opera's big coffee house scenes — here transferred to a nightclub, with a "table dancer" borrowed from Stringfellow's — Freeman reiterates that need for accurate detail. The focus of the scene shifts constantly: from table to table and group to group, but everything on stage demands equal conviction. "When an actor can approach the level of complexity that you see on the street, then you start to get extraordinary and moving work."

Above all, in an opera about soldiers, the soldiering must convince. To that end, Freeman enlisted the help of Lance-Sergeant Tong of the Grenadier Guards. The result was a revelation. He taught the cast drill and "how to do the various things that soldiers do". But he also, Freeman says, "completely upset one's view of what a sergeant in the

Guards might be like" — another reminder of the dangers of caricature, and that "people are much more interesting than actors".

In one important respect, however, the general truth of *Soldaten* is more important than the specific. Lance-Sergeant Tong may have made the soldiers act like soldiers, but the army in ENO's production is deliberately "something of an invention", recognisably contemporary, but definitely not the British Army or any other.

More than two centuries after the original play, 30 years after the opera's premiere, and 25 after the suicide of its composer, our perspective on *Die Soldaten* is not Lenz's or even Zimmermann's. But Freeman hopes to show that the work still speaks with remarkable directness. "The fears in terms of violence and war these days are different," he admits, "so I've tried to relocate the piece in those terms. But like all great works, though its source is its own period, it jumps out of its time."

Die Soldaten (Soldiers) opens at the Coliseum (0171-632 8300) next Tuesday

LONDON CONCERTS

Energetic yet emotionless

BY OPENING its Festival Hall concert under Sir Georg Solti with Bartók's *Divergence for Strings*, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra drew attention to its legendary prowess within a single department. Bartók's scoring weaves intricate textures from the string instruments and this performance was a tour de force of interlacing voices, precisely balanced. It was also characterised by rhythmic energy in abundance.

Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No 1* likewise benefited from the spirited Magyar impulse that Solti brought to bear, generating suitably frenzied dance rhythms with devilish abandon.

Alas, these qualities served less well in the major work in the programme, Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique Symphony*. After a featureless Adagio introduction, the Allegro was launched with immaculate semiquavers and sharp phrasing. But the urgency was superficial, with little sense of tragic intensity; nor was there any greater passion in the lyrical second subject.

The rest of the movement went through the motions of "storm and stress" without truly evoking the inner emotional turmoil of the symphony.

There was one effective passage when the brass tore thrillingly through the orchestral texture, but in the later stages of the work they were allowed to obliterate more important detail. Likewise, in the first movement, accompaniment patterns were hammered out interminably on the strings, irrespective of the far more interesting woodwind counterpoint going on above. The final chord on trombones and tubas was brought off with a jerk of the baton, instead of being allowed to die away as marked. And so it went on: the *Waltz* was short on grace or charm, the *March* was manic without suggesting the menace that lies behind it, while the *Finale* simply lacked soul.

The famed Viennese virtuosity was always in evidence: the body of strings makes an exceptionally rich sound, the winds were enviably mellow and the solos well taken. Yet there were surprising lapses: the wind chorus in the coda of the first movement could have been more smoothly executed, and the ensemble of the chord sequence on lower brass near the end of the work left something to be desired.

with a jerk of the baton, instead of being allowed to die away as marked. And so it went on: the *Waltz* was short on grace or charm, the *March* was manic without suggesting the menace that lies behind it, while the *Finale* simply lacked soul.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Vienna PO/
Solti
Festival Hall

Heavy breathing and tree trunks

A PASSERBY overheard a rehearsal of Xenakis's *Séquence* in a London church and called the police. So the story goes. If he had seen that the perpetrators of this massed heavy breathing, yelping and human hubbub were bashing their heads with tuning forks, he might have opted for Social Services. The New London Chamber Choir's performance of this

interested in the extent to which acoustic instruments have kept up with technology. His chosen centrepiece was Volker Staub's *Suagare*, whose forces raised excitement in the foyer — three impressive tree trunks, sirens, hand-blown glass bells and a 20ft stretched membranophone. But rather ordinary sounds emerged from them during

the long, restrained work that followed. Staub himself performed gymnastically on the tree trunks, but he failed to set up any obvious dialogue. This was about the nature of noises: clearly it required another way of listening.

It was left to James Wood's *Séance* to provide a satisfying acoustic experience: using a soprano and vibraphone player, and computer samples with chattering voices behind us. Wood explored the Pythagorean tenet that music is "number made audible". Composing by numbers? In fact, a deeply human drama made from unearthly sounds.

HELEN WALLACE

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CHANGING TIMES

NEW CLASSICAL CDs: Finns, galas and Wagner

VOGAL

Hilary Finch

■ YRJO KILPINEN

Songs
Hännyinen/Gothoni
Finlandia 1576 50024 2***

IN A year in which Swedish song has been memorably celebrated by Anne Sofie von Otter, similar repertoire from Finland is still little known in comparison with that country's orchestral music and opera. The great Finnish baritone, Jorma Hänninen, has always championed the songs of Yrjö Kilpinen (1882-1959), and this disc reveals just how individual they are.

This selection includes Kilpinen's early, stark settings of old Lapp poems about icy marshes, old churches and distant fells; and his heroic ballads and tender lullabies from the *Kanteletar*, Finland's collection of poetry called from oral tradition. Hänninen and his excellent pianist Ralf Gothoni also offer nine simple lyrics by Kilpinen's contemporary, Toivo Kuula.

They celebrate, too, an older contemporary, Oskar Merikanto, who wrote the first ever Finnish opera, in a valuable disc of 32 songs (Finlandia 1576 50021 2) written in that gentle National Romantic vocal language which is uniquely Finnish.

OPERA

John Higgins

■ METROPOLITAN OP-

ERA GALA: James Levine's
25th Anniversary with the
Met

DG 449 177-2***

Also video, DG 072 451-3

GALAS can turn into marathons. The celebration last

April of James Levine's quarter century at the helm of the Met was one. DG's single CD can only select from three hours provided by a starry cross-section of those who have helped to make his tenure there so successful.

Even the video is incomplete. Inexplicably, Alfredo Kraus's Act III aria from *Werther* is on disc only. He was 68 at the time and rightly got one of the three biggest individual cheers of

Tipsy Song from *Perichole*.

The final words went to Birgit Nilsson (77), who stepped away from the microphone to deliver Brünnhilde's war cries into the house in homage to Levine. They were built to last in her day.

ORCHESTRAL

Barry Millington

■ WAGNER

Overtures: Symphony in E;

Wesendonck Lieder (arr. Henze)

Lipovšek/Philadelphia

Orchestra/Savallich

EMI CDC 5 56165 2***

WOLFGANG SAWALLISCH is one of the few senior Wagner conductors to have taken any serious note of the works outside the familiar Bayreuth canon.

His 1980s Munich recordings of *Die Feen*, *Das Liebesverbot* and *Rienzi* have all recently been issued in this country, and now, on this new disc with the Philadelphia Orchestra, he offers the overtures to the latter two. He does not stint on the exuberance of *Das Liebesverbot*, but in *Rienzi* he manages to keep on the right side of vulgarity.

It is good to have another recording of Wagner's long-lost, youthful E Major Symphony. Sawallisch in fact gave its world premiere when the score turned up in Munich in the late 1980s and here he gives a robust but sympathetic account of this attractive movement. It is equally good to have another version of the Wesendonck Lieder in the wonderfully sensitive orchestration by Hans Werner Henze. Sawallisch is as alive to the subtle refinements of the score as Marjanna Lipovšek is to the sense of the words.



James Levine: marathon

the evening. The others were claimed by two more veterans: Carlo Bergonzi (71) in *Luisa Miller* (video only), and Grace Bumbry (59) in *Saint-Saëns's Samson*.

The audience judged well. So did the organisers in making Renée Fleming the only singer to claim three spots: as *Cherubino's* *Louise*, in the secret from *Don Giovanni* and, superlatively, in the closing trio from *Rosenkavalier*. Ruth Ann Swenson glitters as Gounod's Juliette. Roberto Alagna and Angela Gheorghiu bill and coo away in the Cherry Duet from Mascagni's *L'amico Fritz* (video only). And Frederica von Stade enchants still in

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A draught of vintage Cognac and its paler imitation

George Melly on two views of a painter who changed the way we see the world

At the end of Volume One of John Richardson's flawless biography, we left Picasso limbering up to start work on a major icon of modern art, that clumsy masterpiece *Les Femmes d'Alger*. It was both a well-baited hook and a natural breaking-off point. Behind lay the sentimentalities of the Blue Period and the compressed perspective of Cézanne were already to hand. Only the revelation of African masks and fetiches was needed to ensure the marvelous accident called Cubism.

Montparnasse in the first decade of the century seems not unlike the 1960s — no rock'n'roll, of course, but plenty of sex'n'drugs. But not all serene: there is the vivid historical background, the painter's progress from extreme poverty to affluence, his rapacious carnalism of other, sometimes lesser talents and the cagey rivalry with Matisse.

As for Picasso himself, this is no hagiography. Richardson, despite his informed admiration, leaves no doubt as to his cowardice and macho cruelty. It is decidedly warts and all. He is equally ruthless when it comes to deflating the mythical balloon, mostly blown-up

A LIFE OF PICASSO
1907-1917
The Painter of Modern Life

By John Richardson
Jonathan Cape, £30
ISBN 0 224 03120 1
PICASSO
Portrait of Picasso
as a Young Man
By Norman Mailer
Little, Brown, £25
ISBN 0 316 88173 2

by the painter himself. This is the beneficial outcome of exhaustive research; not a letter, journal, review or dealer's stockist seems to have escaped him. As a result the comic-strip version we had come to accept is entirely discredited.

There is a huge cast-list. Many of them, Gertrude Stein for instance, change as the story unfolds. Others, like that eccentric homosexual, holy fool and off-and-on peasant, Max Jacob, mince on like a camp music-hall act at irregular intervals. Most impressive of all is the great panjandrum of the modern spirit (and hopelessly inept proselytizer for Cubism) the poet Guillaume Apollinaire.

Yet all the gossip, enjoyable as it is, remains rightly subsidiary to the central theme: the invention, development and decline of Cubism, and while Fernand Olivier is, at any rate to begin with, Picasso's muse, it is his relationship with his collaborator, Georges Braque, which is this volume's central triumph. Between 1907 and the outbreak of the Great War (when Braque was called up) they were, as Braque wrote, "roped together, establishing precarious footholds as they scaled uncertain heights."

Nor was Picasso necessarily the innovator (on the contrary, it was Braque who introduced *papier collé*) and yet, at the peak of "analytical" Cubism, their work was so close that it was almost interchangeable, although Richardson rejects the legend that they would sometimes sign each other's canvases. Cubism, both "analytical" and "synthetic" is at the heart of the book and what follows is, of necessity, sometimes a drying fall.

We take leave of Picasso, in part, seduced by the manipulative Jean Cocteau, about to join Diaghilev in Rome where he will make a



The painter and his muse: Fernand Olivier and Picasso in 1910

disastrous marriage to one of the company's ballerinas.

His art, too, is bifurcating into an increasingly decorative Cubism and Ingres-like neo-Classicism. It doesn't look too hopeful but there is no reason to worry. It won't be too

long, Richardson reassures us, before the artist is to hang a sign on the door-handle of his chic studio. It will read "Je ne suis pas un gentleman!"

Like Richardson, Mailer writes a great deal about the opium and

orgies down at the old Bateau-Lavoir, but unlike Richardson he appears to have no feeling whatsoever for Picasso as an artist. In place of profound insight he relies on bombast and long extracts from other writers to bully us into swallowing his simplistic theories.

Of course, not being at all stupid, he makes the odd shrewd point: that the rich love to own the Blue Period because it makes them somehow feel less guilty about the poor; but when it comes to analysing Cubism, for instance (in my view the peak of Picasso's entire oeuvre), he is like someone trying to dissect a hummingbird while wearing boxing gloves.

At first I felt sorry for Mailer, having to stand comparison with Richardson's magnum opus, but on second thought wondered if their simultaneous publication wasn't a deliberate stratagem. Mailer's book is shorter, easier to digest, and stuffed full of erotica and glossy full page colour plates. It put me in mind of a pre-war Australian advertisement for brandy — "the Cognac for people who don't like the taste of Cognac".

Hang them without fail

George R. Urban

THE UNKNOWN LENIN
From the Secret Archive
Edited by Richard Pipes
Yale, £18.50
ISBN 0 300 06919 7



Freshly released documents by and about Lenin are among the most valuable to emerge from the now largely unfrozen Soviet archives. At least two myths are now under scholarly scrutiny: of Lenin, the hard but far-sighted and equitable mover of men and ideas; and of Lenin the righteous avenger — omniscient, ubiquitous and infallible.

The two are, of course, only different faces of the same myth, for in the Byzantine-Orthodox environment of Soviet Russia, Lenin's savage "repudiations" (Winston Churchill's word) might not have survived him without the support of a religious type of hero-worship borrowed from the spirituality of the old order and set in its symbol. For Lenin, the sacred and the profane lived in tolerable if, in its final stages, strained, symbiosis — until, in 1989-90, the modern world intruded and brought it down in a bloodless triumph of common sense.

Professor Richard Pipes's superbly edited selection of Lenin's documents, *The Unknown Lenin*, is, of course, taken from the deeds of the living Lenin — from Lenin before he was declared founder and seer by the Soviet priestly caste. It detracts nothing from this significant volume to note that Lenin's legend repays study almost as much as the man himself. As Pipes points out in his introduction: "The one sentiment Lenin never appealed to was deism: apparently he had no faith in it." The more important to expose his worship, and the terrible things committed in its name, to the cool light of reason.

For what some of these documents show is terrible indeed. If Lenin's myth inspired vast crimes against humanity, then the man himself did no less. No sign here of the gentle Lenin of community integrity or trusting the people. The documents confirm what a few years ago General Dmitri Volkogonov demonstrated with devastating clarity: that Stalinism, the show-trials, forced collectivisation and the Gulags were not just the possible, but also the necessary outcomes of Lenin's intentions and policies.

We can now see Lenin as a man whose outstanding brainpower and unbending resolve were harnessed, from the beginning, to a scheme of things so Utopian in their purpose and wicked in their execution that only genetic change in the nature of Man would have made possible their practical realisation. Nor were the supposed beneficiaries of all this — the working class — to be

exempt from the experiment.

"For humankind at large," Pipes tells us, quoting Gorky, "Lenin had nothing but scorn... he treated the working class much as a metalworker treated iron ore." Everything that so shocked the world about Stalin's crimes when Khrushchev made an almost clean breast of them in his "secret" speech in 1956, is prefigured in Lenin and has to be treated as a single self-portrait of totalitarian rule.

Lenin's attitude to the resistance of desperate peasants was no more generous. In August, 1918, writing to the communists of the Penza district where the farmers had rebelled against the confiscation of their grain, Lenin ordered: "I hang (hang without fail, so the people see) no fewer than one hundred known kulaks, rich men, blood-suckers. 2. Publish their names. 3. Take from them all the grain. 4. Designate hostages — as per yesterday's telegram. Do it in such a way that for hundreds of years around, the people will see, tremble, know, shout: they are strangling and will strangle to death the blood-sucker kulaks. Telegraph receipt and implementation." (Document 24, Lenin's emphasis.)

"In the light of these barbarous orders," Pipes observes, "one is no longer surprised to learn that when Molotov, the only communist official to serve both Lenin and Stalin throughout their political careers, was asked to compare the two, he declared without hesitation that Lenin had been the 'more severe'."

But Richard Pipes's selection of documents sheds new light on many other crucial aspects of early Bolshevik rule as well. Lenin relied on Stalin much more than Trotsky would have liked us to believe. Lenin worked for the export of the communist revolution in Europe and beyond Europe as intensely as Trotsky, using the war against Poland as a potential springboard for the Sovietisation of Germany and Britain, but he badly overrated the revolutionary ardour of

the English working class. He initiated the persecution and deportation of dissident intellectuals. Above all, he was convinced that, after the defeat of the Central Powers and the punitive Versailles treaties, 70 per cent of the world's population was living in a state of subjection ("colonies"), waiting to back communist Russia in a global sweep of revolution "given a correct [Kremlin] policy".

Incisive intelligence, a well-stocked mind, messianic fervour, the ethics of a Genghis Khan and a capacity for colossal misjudgments were all combined in the head of

A demonstration of absolute power: Lenin's handwritten instructions for the execution of the kulaks in August 1918

this warped visionary. So lasting and inescapable was the tyranny of his myth that Mikhail Gorbachev, in the terminal days of the Soviet empire, went on proudly describing himself as a Leninist — a Leninist, to be sure, who then proceeded to deliver the coup de grace to the Leninist system in the name of Vladimir Ilych Lenin. For the myth could be tailored to taste, and was mercifully, tailored to taste in those fateful days of 1989-1990.

George R. Urban was Director of Radio Free Europe, 1983-86.

RICHARD SORGE joined the German Communist Party in its earliest days. He was recruited by the intelligence wing of the Communist Third International and poached from there by the Soviet military intelligence organisation, the GRU, in the late 1920s. He was one of the earliest of Soviet agents to win international fame. The spy-ring which he headed operated in Japan from the mid-1930s to Sorge's arrest, together with his collaborators, in October 1941. He was executed in 1944.

Sorge was in no sense "Stalin's spy". He only escaped being purged in 1937 by evading his recall to Moscow; in general, unlike the NKVD's officers abroad, the GRU's agents in place tended to be left to do their job. Sorge's reports of the imminence of the German attack on the Soviet Union in 1941 were dismissed by Stalin as "British provocations".

Sorge's supposed greatest feat was to uncover the Japanese decision, in the autumn of 1941, to move south against Indo-China rather than north against the Soviet Union. Knowledge of this enabled Stalin to save Moscow from Hitler's onslaught by transferring a substantial part of the Red Army's concentrations in the Soviet Far East to Europe.

Whyman has persuaded the Russians to release to him the texts of Sorge's reports in 1941. Their effect is to cloud this picture of Sorge's success. It appears that from what can only be described as an attack of "boishness", Sorge's wireless operator decided in the summer of 1941 only to

Out in the cold

Donald Cameron Watt

STALIN'S SPY
Richard Sorge and the Tokyo Espionage Ring
By Robert Whyman
I. B. Tauris, £25
ISBN 1 85064 044 3



Sorge: escaped purging

transmit about a third of the messages given him. Whyman's failure to synchronise the timing of these messages with the transfer of Soviet troops from the Far East even suggests that at least some of the transfers took place before Sorge's crucial reassurances were received in Moscow.

Whyman has interviewed virtually all the survivors from Sorge's circle, including the women he loved and the members of the German embassy in Tokyo, where his friendship with Ambassador Ott made him *persona grata*. His cover was that of a commentator on Japanese politics and economics; as such he was perceptive and effective.

His book is heavily weighted towards the months June-October 1941. It swings uneasily between Sorge's highly charged private life and loves and his reportage on the debates around the Emperor on whether and where Japan should strike. In this it must be said that Whyman's failure to match what we now know of the timing and content of those debates with Sorge's reportage sows doubts as to Sorge's previous reputation.

Sorge emerges as a typical le Carré character, cloven between his private and professional concerns, buoyed by his self-esteem, living on the dregs of his once potent ideological convictions, the credibility of his achievements diminished by our total ignorance of what the Soviet decipherers were gleaming from those Japanese military and diplomatic communications with their embassies in Europe — which were to prove so fertile a source of intelligence for British and American cryptographers. He is nevertheless a character well worth your encounter.

Donald Cameron Watt is Professor Emeritus of International History in the University of London.

Mother of a novel

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THE GUNPOWDER PLOT

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by ANTONIA FRASER

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WHEN THE French philosopher Raymond Aron wrote his memoir of illness, in the late 1980s, he called it *Mon Sida* — My Aids. A virus may have no morals and no character, but each host entertains it differently. This *Wild Darkness*, subtitled 'The Story of My Death', is emphatically about Harold Brodkey's Aids, his and nobody else's.

The book, which covers the period from the spring of 1993 to late autumn of 1995 (Brodkey died early this year), has remarkably little to offer anyone not already convinced of his genius as a writer. The prevailing tone is of weary grandeur, with excursions into stylised lyric and a rather theatrical stoicism ("I am used to reconstructing myself in the middle of catastrophe"). At one point Brodkey goes so far as to describe, being diagnosed and hospitalised as a relief — "It was a relief to get away from the noise and rank of jagged greatness..." He

Be not proud

Adam Mars-Jones

THIS WILD DARKNESS
By Harold Brodkey
Faber, £14.99
ISBN 1 85196 546 6

is "relieved" also by the thought of death, after the effort of writing and then of defending what he has written. He refers to "my sad conviction of the important validity of my ideas (of what my work presents)" — with sadness such a comfort, it would be greedy to want happiness. It, as he says, "writing keeps you humble," then it must be a particular kind of humility — but then he would never need to stop at one kind ("I have a number of kinds of humility...").

At intervals Brodkey dives into his self-love and manages a few lengths, emerging from the pool refreshed and glowing. In practical terms it is his wife Ellen who makes his survival possible, and though his attempts at a character sketch of her are rather strained, a sense of devotion does come through. Woe be to her, though if she asks "Do you love me?" (Ellen, I feel too disgusting, too subhuman to talk about love... I feel everything is occurring in a flat world, without dimension, without future, without color. Obviously I care about what you do. Obviously I love and admire you...") Near the end, Ellen gets something like the last word. Brodkey apologises for his illness making so much work for her, and she says: Harold, you were always this much work.

He states that he has no sexual secrets from Ellen, though his account of his behaviour is tendentious. At one point, he claims to have "experimented with homosexuality to break my pride, to open myself to the story". At another, to have preferred "women, and homosexuals" to "men" (a curious distinction, that, because men "stank of rage").

But in the last 20 pages, illness gets Brodkey where he lives, in his pride in his work. He comes to feel that he has written nothing of value. He soon recovers, and announces that if he had to give up what he has written in order to be clear of his disease, he wouldn't do it. For the reader, though, the affecting parts of the book are likely to be the ones when he is not "Harold Brodkey" but only Harold Brodkey — when the virus has nibbled away at even the persona built up over a lifetime.

TENNIS

Henman and Rusedski struggling to season's end

By Alex Ramsay

PLAYED indoors with not a window in sight and under artificial lighting that makes even the healthiest of players look like they have just been dug up, the Guardian Direct British national championships struggled to generate any enthusiasm yesterday. Sure enough, the top two men were doing their stuff, but neither Tim Henman nor Greg Rusedski was in the mood for fun and games.

Both men made inordinately slow starts to their matches, snatching the first set in the tie-break before getting down to business in the second. Rusedski finally disposed of James Fox 7-6, 6-4, while Henman polished off Nick Baglin 7-6, 6-0 — but then Telford comes as something of a culture shock after a year spent on the ATP Tour playing the star names. A week in the gloom playing people only the most ardent tennis followers have heard of takes some getting used to.

This tournament is a bit of a let down, because the season is over for us on the ATP Tour," Rusedski said. Mentally, I could have been more focused, but it's good to have a close match, to get used to the court and surroundings. But I always felt in control, there was no chance that I would lose."

Looking forward to a holiday next week before preparations start for next season, Rusedski is reasonably happy with the end of his year. He began 1996 ranked No 33 in the world, his highest to date, before sliding down again at a rate of knots and then climbing back over the past few weeks. "I'm ranked No 48, but I feel like I'm a much better player now than I was at the end of last year," he said.

His career has been a series of highs and lows. He broke into the top 50 for the first time three years ago and, since then, has been up and down the rankings like a yo-yo.

Looking at the rise and rise of Henman this year, Rusedski can see where the future pitfalls lie. "The first year you come up is a lot easier," he said.

"This year, everything has been a bonus for Tim, although he has still done fantastically well. But next year will be a lot harder for him. That will be an interesting year, a real test. When I broke into the top 50, I was only 19 and the following year I had a big drop. Tim will be 23 next year, he's more mature and I think that will help him."

As for Rusedski, he will spend the next few weeks planning for 1997 with his coach, Brian Teacher. Gradually, he feels, the brain and the body are beginning to work together on the key points, even if it was not happening too regularly yesterday. James Fox is not the toughest of opponents, ranked No 16 in Great Britain and No 590 in the world. He spent much of last year deciding whether he wanted to play tennis at all.

To look at, Fox seems to be a player in the Luke Milligan mould — rather skinny, with a big, baggy shirt and an old face. Like Milligan, he is an awfully nice chap, which is perhaps why Rusedski did not have the heart to finish him off. The British No 2 served for the first set at 5-3 and was broken, held three set points on Fox's serve at 5-4 and still could not do the deed. Even with three match points in his pockets, Rusedski threw in a couple of double faults to give Fox a chance, before finally managing to win.

At least Sam Smith was able to break out of the Telford torpor. She had her scare in the first round and, back on court again yesterday, was not going to fall into the same trap twice. The women's No 1 seed wasted little time in beating Lizzi Jelis 6-1, 6-3 and plays Claire Taylor today in the quarter-finals.

Schoolboy sets out to emulate uncle



Cousins is intent, for now, on enjoying the competition that has become synonymous with his surname

Cousins has virtue of relative values

John Hennessy sees history repeating itself at the British ice skating championships

Once, there was one Cousins in British ice skating. Robin, the Olympic champion of 1980. Then there were two, when Steven (no relation) began winning a series of national titles in 1989. Now there are three, with the emergence of Tristan Cousins, a nephew of Robin, who is competing for the junior title at the Tessa British championships at Guildford, which begin today.

Tristan, a 14-year-old of surprising maturity, is quick to recognise that his claim to attention rests upon his name and his distinguished pedigree. "I'm just going out to enjoy myself here," he said. "I know I can't win and I don't want to win. It's too early. I shall just play safe and put triple jumps on hold."

He won the primary championship earlier this year and could spend four more years as a junior. The thought is not in his mind.

"Two years at this level will be enough," he said.

Before he moved to Brighton, Robin Cousins would often see his nephew training at Sevenage, where he comes under the tutelage of Viktor Teslia, a member of the Russian academy. Indeed, Steven and Tristan were members of a team sent to Slovenia under Robin's stewardship.

The youngest Cousins is conspicuously short-sighted, a defect that he believes confers an advantage. "It's quite nice not to see the judges. They take your concentration away and you tend to forget what you're doing." Although recognising that bearing a surname like his can be a handicap, he submits like a trouper to the many demands made upon him by the media.

When the time came to skate the short programme yesterday, he was as good as his word, putting the triple jumps behind him and settling for a high double axel (reminiscent of Robin), a double flip, double toe loop and a double lutz, even though he touched down with his free foot. His marks ranged as high as 4.5, but were sufficient only to leave him in fourth place going into the free skating today.

It is better, perhaps, to concentrate for now on Cousins's namesake, Steven, and discover how he will react to a his dismal world championship display in Canada in March. After finishing fifth in the men's short programme there, he followed that with the "worst performance of my life" to drop to fifteenth place. However, the same country offered some reassurance last week, where Cousins finished fourth in the Skate Canada competition in an outstanding field led by Elvis Stojko, the world champion.

It should help Cousins's cause in attempting to win his eighth successive senior British championship here this week that his two most dangerous opponents, Neil Wilson and Clive Shorten, have both encountered setbacks in training.

The women's senior event has suffered even more, with the withdrawal of Stephanie Main, the holder, and Nancy Manning, who was fifth last year. Main has had a tonsil operation and Manning has an injured back. In their absence, the spotlight falls on two skaters from Swindon. Jenna Arrowsmith, the winner two years ago, and Zoe Jones.

FOOTBALL

New survey reveals changing face of fans

By John Goodbody

WIMBLEDON'S forthright football style may not impress the more refined critics, but the club still has a higher proportion of season-ticket holders than any of its FA Carling Premiership rivals. This increasing shift in all clubs towards the more affluent and educated supporter was revealed in a new national report published yesterday.

Of the Wimbledon season-ticket holders surveyed, 38.6 per cent have a degree, compared with Manchester United's 36.8 per cent and Leeds United's 34.6 per cent, their two closest rivals.

There is also a growing number of spectators whose salaries are higher than £30,000, putting them among the top eight per cent of earners in the country. Rick Parry, the Premier League's chief executive said: "No club would be depressed about having affluent fans. There is no need to be ashamed at these figures. However, we also have to ensure that the new generation of supporters are coming through."

John Williams, of the Sir Norman Chester Centre for football research at Leicester University, which published the report, said: "Fewer affluent season-ticket holders now go to every game. They buy their season tickets because they know that there will be pressure on tickets for certain matches and for the other fixtures they lend their season tickets out to friends."

Williams added: "Women are also increasingly going to games. However, there must be concern that some of the new supporters are not always attached to a particular club. They sometimes regard themselves as customers, not as supporters, and would, therefore, be less reliable in their attendance if the club does badly. This should set some alarm bells ringing."

The increase in the proportion of affluent supporters follows the move to all-seater stadiums after the Taylor Report in 1990. The survey, the biggest ever on supporters, was carried out on 20,470 spectators, more than 1,000 for each Premiership club.

SAILING

Ariel crew survive mishaps to stay in front

By Edward Gorman
SAILING CORRESPONDENT

THE BT Global Challenge fleet is not the only one to be keeping the spinnaker builders in business. Sir Robin Knox-Johnston's eight-strong Clipper 96 fleet has been working its way through a fair few sails as the 60th David Pedrick-designed sloops have surfed their way towards Fort Lauderdale in Florida.

The leading boat, Ariel, skippered by Ras Turner, has a 160-mile cushion over her pursuers and has only about 200 miles left to sail. She should be the first to finish the opening leg sometime today and Sir Robin will be waiting to congratulate the crew.

Behind her, Chrysolite, under Colin de Mowbray, has moved into second place after covering 205 miles in the last 24 hours. Mermers, skippered by Jim Thom, fell to third, where she has a slim 20-mile advantage over Taeping, under the charge of Adrian Faers.

The Clipper crews have pushed hard and stretched their expanding sea-faring abilities to the limit on this leg and, as a result, almost every boat has suffered damage to spinnakers and some, including Ariel, to poles as well.

Chris Wilcox, an Ariel crew member, said: "As long as the Atlantic leg continues, the race has become one of preserving your boat as much as boatspeed. Most boats have, to one degree or another, had mishaps with spinnakers and poles and our ability to improvise repairs on board has been tested to the limit."

Pete Goss, of Great Britain, on Aqua Quorum, slipped from seventh to tenth place on his way through the Canaries in the Vendée Globe non-stop single-handed round-the-world race. However, he overtook Catherine Chabaud, on Whirlpool-Europe 2, yesterday to claim back tenth place. The leader, Yves Parlier, on Aquitaine Innovations, is being hotly pursued by Isabelle Audebert, on PRR, both of whom are about 50 miles ahead of the main group, which is led by Hervé Laurent, on Groupe-191.

CRICKET: AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY SUMMONS REINFORCEMENTS FOR MATCH WITH ENGLAND A

Marsh calls for outside help

FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT IN MOUNT GAMBIER

RODNEY MARSH would never admit it, but he has unwillingly paid England a huge compliment. His choice of two over-age players in the Australian Cricket Academy squad to face the A team here tomorrow does not indicate fear of the touring party, but it certainly reveals a healthy respect that was never evident during his playing career.

Marsh, head coach at the Academy, will be remembered for labelling England's bowlers "pie-throwers" as much as for being a ferocious competitor who refused to give an inch, particularly when playing the Poms. However,

his reaction to England A's outstanding win over South Australia in Adelaide earlier this week has been to call up Jeremy Allen, 25, a seam bowler who has represented Western Australia, and Shawn Craig, 23, a left-handed opener and leg spinner who scored a century against the Academy for Victoria 2nd XI last season, which indicates that his recent remark that his present crop were "not up to scratch" could be the truth.

David Graveney, the England A manager, while suspicious of Marsh's selection, is delighted at Australia's re-evaluation of the England

party after their win over the holders of the Sheffield Shield. "The purpose of this tour is get a little respect for our cricket in the eyes of Australia and the victory has done that," he said. "People will now sit up and take notice and realise we are not bad players and that we have some people who will be knocking on the door next summer."

Jason Gallian, who missed both matches in Adelaide with a hand injury, is almost certain to return for England A, but Dean Headley may be rested after his match-winning performance against South Australia.

New Zealand finally rule over Sri Lanka

NEW Zealand qualified for the final of the Champions Trophy in Sharjah yesterday after a day of drama and confusion over the rules of the competition.

New Zealand lost by four wickets to Pakistan in their last league fixture and ended the preliminary section of the tournament level on three points with Sri Lanka. Mike Smith, the tournament referee, first announced that Sri Lanka had advanced to the final against Pakistan on Friday because of a superior net run-rate.

However, soon after, Smith, the former England

captain, changed his mind and decided that New Zealand had qualified for the final because of their better record in the group matches against Sri Lanka. His decision came after a phone call to David Richards, chief executive of the International Cricket Council, in London.

Don Kenyon, Worcestershire's first county championship-winning captain, died in hospital on Tuesday night after being taken ill at a function at New Road. Kenyon, 72, played for Worcestershire for 21 years and made eight Test appearances for England in the 1950s.

Westwood a big hit in Japan

FROM PATRICIA DAVIES IN MIYAZAKI, JAPAN

LEE WESTWOOD, 23, from Worksop, Nottinghamshire, was driving on the practice ground at the Phoenix Country Club here yesterday when Jack Nicklaus, 56, from Columbus, Ohio, arrived. As the Golden Bear tried to stretch his muscles into compliance in preparation for the Dunlop Phoenix Tournament, the richest in Japan, which starts today, he had to raise a wry eyebrow as he stared at the unfamiliar broad back of yet another big-hitting youngster.

Nicklaus might yet get to know Westwood, for the young Englishman, who finished sixth on the European

order of merit last season, winning once, won the Sunbomo Visa Taiheiyo Masters last Sunday, his first victory in Japan in only his second tournament here.

Westwood, aside from being 20 million yen (about £110,000) richer, has noticed a difference already. "I was at the airport," he said, "and I must have been stopped by 20 people, who said 'Visa champion' and wanted to congratulate me. They'd all seen it on television."

Now Westwood has high hopes of receiving an invitation to the Masters at Augusta in April — his wedding, to

Lauree Coltart, sister of Andrew, was scheduled for the Saturday of the Masters, but has been put on hold, just in case.

He is also thinking about making the Ryder Cup team next year at Valderrama, a course he showed he could play when he tied for second place in the Volvo Masters at the end of last month.

In the meantime, he can enjoy sharing practice grounds in exotic places with the likes of Nicklaus and Tom Watson, along with the familiar faces of Costantino Rocca, Frank Nobilo, Thomas Bjorn and Vijay Singh.

Take away (in a somewhat dull, mathematical way.)

Take away (in an almost sensual, beautifully bottled way.)



Bass

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FOOTBALL

Striking difference in profile of goalscoring greats

When is a striker not a striker? When he's a centre forward. Fashions come and fashions go, yet if the entrepreneur, as one scholar put it, is the true hero of capitalism, then the centre forward remains the true hero of football — all the way from the immaculate G. O. Smith, at the turn of the century, to Alan Shearer, who saved England's face against Poland at Wembley last month.

Smith, a peerless Corinthian, would never have scored Shearer's first goal — he did not believe in heading the ball — but his name has run down the ages, together with such as Dixie Dean, Hughie Gallacher, Tommy Lawton and John Charles.

The striker, by comparison, is an upstart. We began to hear about him only after Brazil introduced 4-2-4 in the 1958 World Cup. In time, that became 4-3-3, 4-4-2 and even 4-5-1. The classic centre forward, monarch of the middle, served by his wingers' crosses, sometimes abetted by an attacking inside forward, was challenged by a new phenomenon. Sheer lack of numbers up front meant that the striker had to be a polymath, now holding up the ball, as target man, waiting for reinforcements from behind, now moving to find space on the flanks.

Gianluca Vialli, who came on to revive Chelsea in the second half at Leicester last month, scoring one goal, making two, is a striker. He emerged in Italy as an outside left, then moved into the middle where he can operate effectively with his back to goal, use his technique to make chances for his colleagues or strike himself.

Geoff Hurst, who scored a hat-trick for England in the World Cup final in 1966, had the strength, the heading ability, of the true centre forward, but, converted by West Ham United from left half to inside left, he was of the new rather than the old breed.

The big, battling centre forward, used profitably by

BRIAN GLANVILLE



Arsenal between the wars in the shape of Jack Lambert and Ted Drake, had his precursor in such as Sunny Jim Quinn of Celtic, famous for his dreadnought ways. "All the men Jimmy Quinn killed are living yet," a Scottish apologist said. Centre forwards come in all shapes and sizes. When Jimmy Hogan, the Lancastrian coach, brought his Austrian wunderkind to play England at Chelsea in 1932, he took them the previous Saturday to watch Chelsea play Everton. Chelsea had Gallacher at

'Geoff Hurst was of the new rather than the old breed'

centre forward, Everton had Dean, that stupendous header of the ball. The Austrians were appalled to see both teams consistently playing the ball down the middle to their respective centre forwards.

Among the Austrians sat Matthias Sindelar 'The Man Of Paper', an almost ghostly figure, a centre forward who could drift like ectoplasm through a defence, before rolling the ball over the line.

Centre forwards such as Sindelar live as legends. When his contemporary, Silvio Piola, recently died, at the age of 83, Italian football went into mourning. The tall, muscular Piola scored 30 goals in 34 games for Italy, five of them in

the World Cup finals in 1938 in France.

When Italy next won the World Cup, in Spain in 1982, it was thanks largely to the six goals scored by Paolo Rossi, much smaller than Piola, yet a real centre forward ever since he had been converted by Vicenza from a winger.

Two of the most influential players of past years have been centre forwards, Alfredo Di Stefano, the Argentine who inspired Real Madrid to five European Cup wins in a row, was the incarnation of Total Football before it was ever invented, ubiquitous, the master of the through pass, a lethal finisher.

Johan Cruyff, icon of the Total Football played by Ajax and Holland, was just as predominant if not as robust a figure. And his heir was the remarkable Marco van Basten.

It was a big centre forward who won Germany the European championship last summer. Oliver Bierhoff, coming on as substitute in the final against the Czech Republic, scored twice.

The Germans have never had a greater idol than Uwe Seeler, who led their attack in the 1966 World Cup, his very name a war cry. The Germans loved that squat, resilient figure more than they ever did his prolific successor, Gerd Müller, for all his goals.

And strikers? Recently, albeit at the humble level of a Nationwide League third division game between Barnet and Torquay, I saw Garry Nelson, the Torquay United veteran and footballing author, give a template display of what strikers should do. Now in the middle, now out on the left, now out on the right. All things to all men, but never as glamorous as a centre forward, as Shearer, Walsh, Romario, Batistuta, Ravanelli.

The centre forward as football's eternal hero, how ever much fashions and terminology change.

He soon found out. Praise and personal finance were not on the agenda. After two months as assistant to Ron Atkinson and six months in charge, Addison was dismissed. The curse of Jesus Gil had struck again.

"I was surprised, of course I was, but then again I wasn't, what with his reputation," Addison said. "Jesus was such



After years of globe-trotting, Addison has established his managerial roots at Pen-y-darren Park, Merthyr Tydfil

Addison alights at Costa del Merthyr

Russell Kempson on a well-travelled manager now heading for the Orient



FA CUP

an unpredictable man, he wanted to win everything. He was sometimes charming, one of the boys almost, but would then criticise everyone and everything. You'd be talking or eating with him, all as nice as pie, and then you'd pick up the papers the next day and could barely believe what he was saying in them."

Seven years on, Addison's globe-trotting has been temporarily suspended. His travels have taken him to posts in South Africa, Kuwait and Qatar, as well as Celta Vigo, Cadix and Deportivo Badajoz in Spain, but he has alighted at Pen-y-darren Park, Merthyr Tydfil, and intends to stay for the foreseeable future.

On Saturday, he takes his mid-table Dr Martens League premier division side to Leyton Orient, of the Nationwide League third division, for an FA Cup first-round tie. It will be a family outing for Addison, his wife, Jean, and daughters Rachel, 28, and

on again. "A lot of people wondered why I should choose here, from Madrid to Merthyr if you like," he said. "It suits me, that's why. It's a nice little club, it's got a good set-up and I'm enjoying it."

"Maybe I could have managed a bigger club in this country, but it's probably been a case of out of sight, out of mind. I'm still ambitious. I always will be, but I'm quite happy for the moment."

He recently, he spurned advances from another Spanish second division club.

Addison's return home was sealed: ten days before the start of the season. It involved a 50-minute drive from Hereford, where he lives, a cup of tea and a chat with Ken Gunter, the Merthyr chairman. He has no contract, no other part-time job and, as well as his managerial duties, is content to immerse himself in all things Merthyr.

"When I'd agreed to join, I told my wife that I'd had another offer from abroad," he said. "You should have seen her reaction. I think she was a bit relieved when I told her where it was. Addison's wanderlust may not yet be fully satisfied, but for the time being, a brief trip to the Orient will suffice."

Wimbledon lead way in late escapes

By Russell Kempson

WIMBLEDON and Southampton have shown radical improvement in the FA Cup. In the first round, Wimbledon, on Tuesday night, were forced to scrap in an undignified manner before maintaining their involvement in the Coca-Cola Cup. Only after the scariest of third-round replays, against Luton Town and Lincoln City respectively, did they achieve safe passages into the next round.

Of the pair, Wimbledon, unbeaten in 12 matches and in third place in the Premiership, survived the most torrid experience. They trailed 1-0 to Luton, from the Nationwide League second division, after Blackwell had scored an own goal in the first half.

The match had entered injury time at Kenilworth Road before Castledine equalised to force extra time. Peter Fear scored eight minutes into the additional period to soothe the furored brow of Joe Kinnear, the Wimbledon manager.

"We had to battle right from the start and were probably a bit fortunate in the end," Kinnear said. "We got stronger as the game wore on and, after we'd scored, there was only going to be one winner."

Lennie Lawrence, the Luton manager, whose side had been undefeated in their previous 13 matches, refused to blame Mike Riley, the referee, for adding on stoppage time — unlike angry sections of the home supporters. "I was totally satisfied with the ref's performance and his time-keeping," he said.

Southampton, without a defeat in seven matches, were also 1-0 down against Lincoln at Sincil Bank. Gareth Ainsworth scoring in the ninth minute for the Nationwide League third division club. However, they were unable to repeat their display of the previous round, when they knocked out Manchester City, with Southampton scoring three times in the closing quarter of an hour.

"We didn't panic or change our style," Graeme Souness, the Southampton manager, said. "We kept passing and that's what gave us the opportunities to get back into it."

FOOTBALL

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First round: Walsley 2, Cannock 0. Second round: Walsley 2, Cannock 0.

SCHOOLS MATCH: Boreham and Donnington Cup: Third round: Shawbury 1, Merton 0. Fourth round: Shawbury 1, Merton 0.

WORLD CUP: South American qualifying zone: Chile 1, Uruguay 0. (In Santiago). Oceanian qualifying zone: Western Samoa 2, Cook Islands 1. (In Nuku'alofa, Tonga).

Tuesday's late results: COCA-COLA CUP: Third round: Lincoln City 1, Southampton 2. (At Wembley). Second round: Walsley 2, Cannock 0.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: First division: Barnet 3, Norwich City 1. Second division: Shrewsbury 2, Bristol Rovers 0. Third division: Shrewsbury 2, Bristol Rovers 0.

UNION LEAGUE: Premier division: Barnet 3, Norwich City 1. Second division: Shrewsbury 2, Bristol Rovers 0. Third division: Shrewsbury 2, Bristol Rovers 0.

ICF LEAGUE: Premier division: Barnet 3, Norwich City 1. Second division: Shrewsbury 2, Bristol Rovers 0. Third division: Shrewsbury 2, Bristol Rovers 0.

ICF LEAGUE: Premier division: Barnet 3, Norwich City 1. Second division: Shrewsbury 2, Bristol Rovers 0. Third division: Shrewsbury 2, Bristol Rovers 0.

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RUGBY UNION

TOUR MATCHES: 20 Australia XV 37 Connacht XV. 21 Wales XV 15-17 Connacht XV. 22 Wales XV 15-17 Connacht XV.

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Cambridge turn to McFarland to keep drive alive

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

CAMBRIDGE United, of the Nationwide League third division, have appointed Roy McFarland, the former England centre half, as their new manager. McFarland, who has signed an 18-month contract, succeeds Tommy Taylor, who left to take over at Leyton Orient.

McFarland, capped 28 times by England, had two periods as manager of Derby County and also had a spell at Bradford City before taking Bolton Wanderers into the FA Carling Premiership. He left Burnden Park eight months ago.

"We needed someone of high calibre and experience to keep our promotion campaign going and Roy fits that bill," the Cambridge chairman, Reg Smart, said. "He has operated at a much higher level as a player and manager, but impressed us with his enthusiasm for this job. We had to tell him there was no money to spend on players, but that did not affect his keenness to join us."

Sampdoria's move for Tomas Brulin, of Leeds United, has collapsed because of doubts over the player's fitness. The Swede, 26, was expected to sign on loan until the end of the season, with a view to a permanent move, but the Italian club's doctors say his ankle injury is too serious for the move to go ahead.

Mark Bosnich, the Aston Villa goalkeeper, will appear before a Football Association disciplinary commission tomorrow to answer a charge of misconduct after his Nazi-style salute to Tottenham Hotspur supporters last month. The Australian is still waiting to hear whether police intend to take any further action. After complaints from supporters, a report was submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service.

A crowd of 60,000 is expected for the match between Manchester United and Arsenal on Saturday. About 55,000 will be at Old Trafford while another 5,000 are expected at Highbury to watch the game on the big screen.

Arsenal were allocated only 3,000 tickets for travelling supporters.

THE TIMES MUSIC SHOP

10 great hits for just £1

The Times Music Shop is a new service to readers and on page 44 of today's paper you will find full details of how to take advantage of this new service.

To introduce you to The Times Music Shop we have an incredible sampler CD, in association with Virgin, a leader in the entertainment industry, available for only £1 — to cover the cost of p&p.

This exclusive CD features some of the best hits by the biggest artists of the last few years (see track listing, right) and is available to readers on collection of four tokens published in The Times this week.

Simply send a cheque or postal order for £1 made payable to VED, to: The Times Music Shop, Freeport, SCO681, Forres, IV36 0BR. The closing date is December 31, 1996. Please allow 28 days for delivery. The offer is subject to availability.

You can enjoy an exclusive discount on any of the 10 CDs from which our launch CD is compiled. Buy one for £9.99 or three for just £20. See page 44 for full details of the Music Shop

THE TIMES VIRGIN ENTERTAINMENT DIRECT CD APPLICATION FORM

Send four differently numbered Virgin tokens from The Times with a cheque or postal order for £1 payable to VED, to: The Times Music Shop, FREEPOST, SCO681, Forres, IV36 0BR. Closing date for applications is Tuesday, December 31, 1996. Please allow 28 days for delivery. Offer is subject to availability.

It would help us if you would answer these four questions:

- Which of the following age groups do you fall into? (please tick box)
 - 15-24
 - 25-34
 - 35-44
 - 45-54
 - 55-64
 - 65+
- Which national daily newspaper(s) do you buy regularly (4-6 copies) during the week?
 - ☐ The Times
 - ☐ The Sun
 - ☐ The Daily Mail
 - ☐ The Daily Mirror
 - ☐ The Daily Express
 - ☐ The Daily Telegraph
 - ☐ The Sunday Times
 - ☐ The Sunday Express
 - ☐ The Sunday Mirror
 - ☐ The Sunday Telegraph
 - ☐ The Sunday Mail
 - ☐ The Sunday Mirror
 - ☐ The Sunday Telegraph
 - ☐ The Sunday Mail
- Which national Sunday newspaper(s) do you buy regularly (2-4 copies) during the week?
 - ☐ The Times
 - ☐ The Sun
 - ☐ The Daily Mail
 - ☐ The Daily Mirror
 - ☐ The Daily Express
 - ☐ The Daily Telegraph
 - ☐ The Sunday Times
 - ☐ The Sunday Express
 - ☐ The Sunday Mirror
 - ☐ The Sunday Telegraph
 - ☐ The Sunday Mail
 - ☐ The Sunday Mirror
 - ☐ The Sunday Telegraph
 - ☐ The Sunday Mail
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 - ☐ The Times
 - ☐ The Sun
 - ☐ The Daily Mail
 - ☐ The Daily Mirror
 - ☐ The Daily Express
 - ☐ The Daily Telegraph
 - ☐ The Sunday Times
 - ☐ The Sunday Express
 - ☐ The Sunday Mirror
 - ☐ The Sunday Telegraph
 - ☐ The Sunday Mail
 - ☐ The Sunday Mirror
 - ☐ The Sunday Telegraph
 - ☐ The Sunday Mail

If you would prefer not to receive information and offers from organisations carefully selected by The Times, please tick ☐



The Times/Virgin Entertainment Direct CD track list

SPIN DOCTORS Little Miss Can't Be Wrong
CYNDI LAUPER Girls Just Want To Have Fun
MEATLOAF Dead Ringer For Love
THE BANGLES Manic Monday
THE STRANGLERS Always The Sun
MANIC STREET PREACHERS From Despair To Where
DEACON BLUE Real Gone Kid
SOPHIE B HAWKINS Damn, I Wish I Was Your Lover
TERENCE TRENT D'ARBY If You Let Me Stay
DESTERE Mind Adventures

Mr/Ms/Miss/Ms/Other _____ Initials _____
Surname _____
Address _____
Postcode _____ Day tel _____
3. Which national daily newspaper(s) do you buy occasionally (3 copies or less) during the week?
4. Which national Sunday newspaper(s) do you buy regularly (2-4 copies) during the week?

CHANGING TIMES

Days of unpaid play eclipsed by dash for cash

There was a time when, if you were a young athlete who raced hard and dreamt of some day representing your country, the best you could hope for was to carry away a Wedgewood biscuit barrel or, in those innocent days, a silver cigarette case. From today, if you share those same dreams, you can hope to take home a salary of up to £28,000 a year tax free.

There was a time when sport, even for Olympic hopefuls, was little more than unpaid play: from today, it will be lottery-funded work.

Here are two pictures of British sport — a glimpse of the past and a vision of the future. One is contained in an evocative and lovingly kept scrapbook that chronicles an athletic career launched before the first great war; the other is outlined in a Sports Council blueprint that confidently predicts that instant cash is the way to Olympic glory.

Walter Jarvis was already 22 in 1910, when his name first appeared in newspaper reports of races. A gifted middle and long-distance runner, he was soon winning prizes and his every appearance was lovingly re-

corded in a bound cuttings book kept by his wife.

He worked by day as a clerk in the offices of the Silvertown Rubber Works in London's East End and raced at the weekends at distances from the half-mile to ten miles and more, carrying off an amazing tally of cups and prizes. He ran with a long, elegant stride that was to make him champion miler of all Essex.

The pages of his scrapbook tell of a world long vanished. The list of prizes read like the inventory from a pawnbroker's shop.

'Watermark of British amateurism'

At the Silvertown Rubber Works sports, at Canning Town on May 23, 1914, a champion could have taken his pick from 14-day French mahogany clocks, Morocco and silver cigarette cases, Gladstone bags, gold cufflinks and studs, Wedgewood bowls and servers, silver watches and endless canteens of cutlery.

Jarvis, on that May afternoon, won the "Marathon Race" (10½ miles) in 59min 47sec by more than a mile. He took away a solid gold medal and a three-bottle liqueur stand.

The race programmes of the time tell of an era when sport was pure



play. Among the track and field events were skipping races, tugs of war and veterans events. In one 100 yard handicap race, an 83-year-old romped home in third place. This was a world where sport was genuine recreation — far away from the serious business of work and war.

In the scrapbook, the reports of the races come to an abrupt halt in the middle of a page on August 3, 1914 — on the eve of the outbreak of war.

Without comment or explanation, the pasted-in cuttings resume on March 8, 1919.

The men who turned then from the havoc of the battle fronts to the peace of the playing field were the *Chariots of Fire* generation. Albert Hill, Jarvis's contemporary, training under

Sam Mussabini, the legendary coach, pulled off the 800 and 1,500 metres double in the Olympic Games in Antwerp in 1920.

Rewarding only with their clocks and cigarette cases, their cups and medals, this was the high watermark of British amateurism. This generation of leisure-time athletes would have gaped in disbelief at the plans announced this week for the future of Great Britain's Olympic competitors.

The Sports Council unveils plans today for a £50 million fund from the National Lottery aimed at creating medal-winners.

Instant cash will be made available to elite performers — and there will be back-up money for coaching, travel, equipment and medical treatment. This shift to all-out professionalism comes in the wake of what may have written off as Britain's worst Olympic performance since Helsinki in 1952.

It seems that, to compete with the world these days, it is necessary to offer our sportsmen regular wages and set them to work to earn their money. Good luck to them, and let us hope it works — for press cuttings in a scrapbook will never pay the bills.

There are many, though, who believe that you will never produce a great Olympic champion, if you equate going to the track with just another day at the office.

However, there is one element in the Sports Council's blueprint that has much to commend it, for it tackles a problem as old as organised sport itself. The council plans to set up a counselling service to help sportsmen and women with personal problems, and a training scheme to help them to find jobs at the end of their sporting careers.

At the end of his sporting career, Walter Jarvis found himself in middle age and pitched out of work — a victim of the great economic slump of the early Thirties.

This man, with the values of a vanished age, who had once posed so proudly as rule champion of Essex, found that he was unable to live with the shame, as he saw it, of long-term unemployment. In despair, he took his own life. No more athletics, no more work, no more money.

All that remains is a scrapbook.

JOHN BRYANT

Oliver Holt meets Georgina Usher, a fencer going for broke in the quest for gold

Duellist determined to make her point

Georgina Usher says fencing is like "physical chess". It is a mind game, a battle of anticipation and reaction, of adapting to new tactics and exploiting weaknesses in an opponent's defence. Since she has competed on the world stage, she has felt like a pawn in a knight's world.

Her fate in her formative fencing years has been a bit like that of the Saracen in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, the warrior whirling his blade extravagantly and expectantly around his head as he prepares to fight Indiana Jones, only to be cut down when his opponent draws a gun.

Her story of fighting against people with what seem like unfair advantages is a familiar one in Britain, of course. Lack of funding, trying to mix the dream of Olympic success with the reality of holding down a job and coming up

against opponents from other countries who are fencing full time has sometimes caused her to be overwhelmed by their weight of experience.

Five weeks ago, Usher, 24, who is Britain's leading epeeist, finally grew tired of the cycle of underachievement. A Cambridge graduate in computer science, she walked out of her highly-paid job with Andersen Consulting so that she could train full time for the European championships in Limoges last week. The effect astounded even her.

Despite the presence of most of the France team that dominated the Atlanta Olympic Games and other top fencers from strongholds of the sport such as Hungary and Germany, she made a mockery of her 93rd place in the world rankings and finished fifth. Two days later, last Sunday, she followed that up by winning the Welsh Open in

Cardiff. "I took the decision to stop work in March this year when qualification was going on for the Olympics," she said. "I didn't make it, but I knew I could have done if I hadn't been subjected to the pressures and stresses that go with a job."

"The only way to do it is to do it properly and over the next four years it is going to be my No 1 priority. I have a four-year plan and at the end of it, hopefully, there will be a gold medal in Sydney. I know it will be very, very hard and I will be broke when it is over, but I have to do it."

The rest of the four-year plan began in a cold and echoing school gym at the foot of Havenscroft Hill, in north London, on Tuesday night. The Havenscroft Fencing Club, one of about a dozen in the capital, practises there three nights a week, straight after the ragged band of hacking five-a-side footballers have trudged out. Usher has little choice but to duel with the same people week-in, week-out in a sport in which countering different styles is essential.

Her task now is to wield her pen with the same flourish as her epee, to try to get some sponsors to back her so she can afford more coaching and travel to more of the World Cup events that determine a fencer's world ranking. There are 22 events in the series, but last season she could afford to travel to only five of them.

There has not been time yet for the impact of her performance in Limoges to sink in. Her achievement was so unexpected that it seemed to escape even most of the sport's aficionados in Britain.

Fencing may not be a telegraphic sport, its split-second hits normally invisible without the aid of slow-motion replay, but Usher knows how to explain the allure of an art that was once linked to violence and wounding and is now as delicate and harmless as a skill as ballet dancing.

"Occasionally I get aggressive in fights," she said, "but it



Usher's decision to fence full time has brought rapid results but financial hardship

is not really necessary. If you start punching your actions, you lose the technique of it all. You are not out to hurt somebody. You might lightly flick them round the wrist or try for the foot. When I fence someone, I don't want to cause them physical harm. I just want to win the game. It is all about trying to work out what

a new opponent's favourite moves are. They might be an attacker, in which case you can parry their attack and then riposte. But the next time, they might know I'm going to do that parry so they will try something else. That is where the chess side of it takes over, in the second-guessing.

"You might think it might

give me extra confidence, personally, but it doesn't really work like that. Like most women, I think about what would happen if I got into some sort of situation late at night. But even if I had my fencing bag with me, I think I would probably be more likely to cling to it than take out a sword."

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 49

LOOMERY

(c) The place where looms or guillemots flock together for breeding. Loom is the name given in northern seas to species of the guillemot and diver. Partly from Shetland dialect, partly an adaptation of the Swedish and Danish *loam*.

MOFETTE

(c) An exhalation of mephitic gas escaping from a fissure. Also, an opening or fissure in the earth from which such exhalations escape. From the Italian (Naples) *mofetta*, Spanish *mofeta*.

LAMPION

(a) A pot or cup, often of coloured glass, containing oil or grease with a wick used in illuminations. From the Italian *lampion*, a carriage or street lamp, augmentative of *lampa* a lamp.

MUDDEN

(a) Made of mud, maddy. "Though the windows were unglazed, and the mudden floor was such that his feet often sunk two inches deep during the performance of service."

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE


1... Bg3+! 2 Kx3 Qd6+ 3 Kf2 (3 Kf4 Bc5+ and White is swiftly mated) 3... Qh2+ 4 Ke1 Qg3+ 5 Kd2 Qf2+ 6 Kd3 Bc5+ and wins

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A woman sits on a couchhouse sofa cuddling a huge dog and juggling a lit cigarette. The dog's name is Maxine and she is a single mother with eight dogs the size of ponies; her back garden is a makeshift doghouse. Park enclosure with hedges, pens and dung, and she watches her moved while animals copulate monstrously in front of the nelly. It is not, thankfully, a scene you see every day. Woof. Beside her on the sofa, a small daughter hugs another dog of the same breed, occasionally kissing it on the mouth. "I love the dogs more than the kids," says Maxine, frankly. The child does not react. They know I do, Maxine continues. "That is me. There's a lot worse things I could be as a parent than a dog lover."

dogs of Sheffield: specifically about the dogs, their turds, and their owners. Sorry to say turds so early in the day, but while "faeces" was the favoured word of the featured dog wardens last night (30 sacks of faeces were once recovered from a single basement), it is a bit fastidious and is, besides, impossible to render in the singular. At the beginning of last night's film, a few important facts were flashed on screen. Sheffield has 75,000 dogs; this adds up to 1,000 strays a year, and ten tonnes of faeces a day. Which is a hell of a lot of turds, when you think about it.

"Mr Fox", an infernal place into which environmental health officers advanced holding air-freshener sprays at arm's length and peeling their shoes off the carpet. Generally O'Dwyer's firm was aloof from finger-pointing, not a bit concerned with blame—as Mr Savage accused Mrs Buttery, and Mrs Buttery accused Mr Savage, and their dogs looked all dewy innocence at the camera—but by the time we met the offensive (and very drunk) Mr Fox, we would be forgiven in Heaven for wanting to punch his lights out.



Lynne Truss

knotted string," said the wise Chinese healer while Edgar grimaced and squirmed. *Trust Me, I'm a Doctor* was exposing surgical malpractice and dabbling with homeopathy in a more direct and (honestly) more entertaining fashion. As I said last week, *The Fragile Heart* is a morality play so loaded against the puffed-up Edgar, and all he stands for, that he is little more than a lesson in the error of pride.

down by a bus next week, there's no justice. No wonder I preferred Dr Hammond in *Frustr Me, I'm a Doctor* cheerfully admitting that the main problem he had with homeopathy was that "the central principle sounds so completely bonkers."

up. Of course, soap opera has fixed rule about terrible life-crisis scenes: if a marriage hits the buffers, a noisy wedding celebration must be going on next door. Comedy and tragedy, you know. Poignant.

So while Ken and Deirdre

100

CHANNEL 4

6.35am PRO STARS (920751)
7.00 THE BIG BREAKFAST (21376)
9.00 HERE'S ONE I MADE (1)
Cookery (78808)
9.30 SCHOOLS: Middle English
Maths Programme 10.05
Eye 10.25 Geographical Eye
Festivals de France 11.00
Cool in Cattan 11.20 Film at
Showcase 11.40 The Spentall
Programme (826207)
12.00 HOUSE TO HOUSE (8) (81172)
12.30pm TRUMPION (1) (7104240)
12.45 ALFIE ATKINS (1) (7108795)
1.00 SESAME STREET (14988)
2.00 THE DINGLES (46811240)
3.05 FILM: The Stars Look Down
(1935) with Michael Redgrave as
son fighting for miners' rights. D.
Carol Reed (920172)
4.00 FIFTY-TO ONE (Telesat)
4.30 COUNTDOWN (Telesat)
5.00 RICK LAKE (Telesat)
(920172) 5.45 ANTON MOSIS
NATURALLY (Caeftay) (5842240)
6.00 NEW GAMESMASTER (Caeftay)
(269)
6.30 HOLLYOAKS (Caeftay) (8) (848)
7.00 CHANNEL 4 News (Caeftay)
7.30 THE SLOT (818375)
8.00 DOSH The last of the series offers
an cutting your tax bill and
benefits. Plus, how to reduce the
traditional wedding. (Telesat) (8)

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall

8.30 **TV DINNERS:** Five programmes of amateur chefs as they prepare sumptuous dinner parties (9808)

9.00 **DISPATCHES:** An investigation of North Yorkshire Ambulance (Televised) (570571)

9.45 **THE LLOYDS BANK/CHANNEL CHALLENGE:** Can Cam partygoer become caught up plans of a corrupt policeman (C636358)

10.00 **FILM: Ultimate Betrayal** (1987) Heavy Cooney as the brutal last seemingly perfect family. David Donald Wrye (Televised) (573822)

11.45 **FOUR-MATCHES:** Electric P (414882)

12.20 **MOVIEWATCH (1)** (1034554)

12.25 **FOUR-MATCHES:** Shorts (4516)

1.35 **FILM: Snake Tanya** (1986) with Dale and Genevieve Buckle. Dramatic man returning to his home to be a being drawn into a land dispute. by David Green (980931)

3.25 **FILM: Murder by Contract** (b/w) Vince Edwards. A hitman is hired to murder a female witness who can expose protection. Directed by

[illegible][illegible]

CARTOON NETWORK

Continuous cartoons from 8:00am to 9:00am, more than TNT films as below.

8:00pm The Adventures of Robin Hood (1938) (86652025) 11:00pm The First Wives Club (1996) (87765372) 12:00am The First Wives Club (1996) (87765372) 1:00am The First Wives Club (1996) (87765372)



ICE SKATING 46

Cousins cuts a familiar dash at British championships

SPORT

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 14 1996

RUGBY UNION 49

Australians' late reply ends brave Connacht fight



Rangers cast as underdogs

Burns urges Celtic to be local heroes

By Kevin McCarron

WITH its brutal collisions, with its exultation over the winning of even a throw-in, an Old Firm game offers feral football. Yet, despite appearances, it may not be muscle and aggression that truly determine the outcome. When Rangers travel to Celtic Park this evening, the nuances of temperament are likely to matter more than any show of bravado.

Celtic are at the top of the Scottish League premier division, but ahead by a margin of one on goal difference; their lead is, at this early point in the season, insubstantial. If the standings had been determined through alphabetical order, they could hardly have been less significant. Nevertheless, Celtic's precedence has had its impact at each club.

"It is not necessarily a bad thing that we are behind," Brian Laudrup, the Rangers forward, said slyly. "Now Celtic will find out what it is like to be the hunted rather than the hunter." It is impossible for the Dane or anyone else to overlook the psychology of the contest. For the home team tonight, the game is almost a rite of passage.

Tommy Burns's side can only prove it has attained maturity by defeating Rangers. Without a victory in the

last seven Old Firm fixtures, Celtic have so far been unable to struggle across that threshold. The manager argues that there is no festering sense of inadequacy, since his side has at least played well in a few of those games.

Cunningly, Burns also floats the idea that Rangers' run of success against Celtic could itself have become a form of psychological burden. In any case, he cannot accept that there is any excuse for an ambitious footballer to be daunted by an Old Firm

Addison alights 48
Striking differences 48
McFarland's task 48

match. "You shouldn't fear the nervous tension," Burns said, "because your career will be over all too soon, anyway. It's a great stage, a great test of your fortitude, of how far you will push yourself for the team and the supporters. If you win, it's a fantastic feeling. That really is living."

The hope and the apprehension are greater now, though, than they were when Burns was a player. Rangers' attempt, this season, to equal Celtic's record of nine successive championships has increased the frenzy of an

already hysterical fixture. Walter Smith, the Ibrox manager, almost finds comedy in the public reaction.

"There was extra hype for the first Old Firm game of the season," he noted. "It's worse for this second one and it'll be worse still for the third. Eventually, we'll blow each other up." Given the volatile circumstances, Smith would be grateful for the soothing presence of Andy Goram this evening.

The goalkeeper has had a hip injury and the Rangers manager dutifully notes the long-term damage that might be done by a premature return to action, but the temptation of fielding Goram must be hard to resist. With a series of remarkable saves last season, he came close to filling the minds of Celtic players with a sense of futility when they tried to beat him.

Burns, for his part, must be toying with the idea of including Jorge Cadete, even if he has been missing since damaging a hamstring, against SV Hamburg, on September 24. The Portugal forward has not yet appeared in an Old Firm game, but his pace and vitality seem to qualify him for the conflict. Yesterday, however, Burns insisted that Cadete was not ready to be anything more than a substitute.

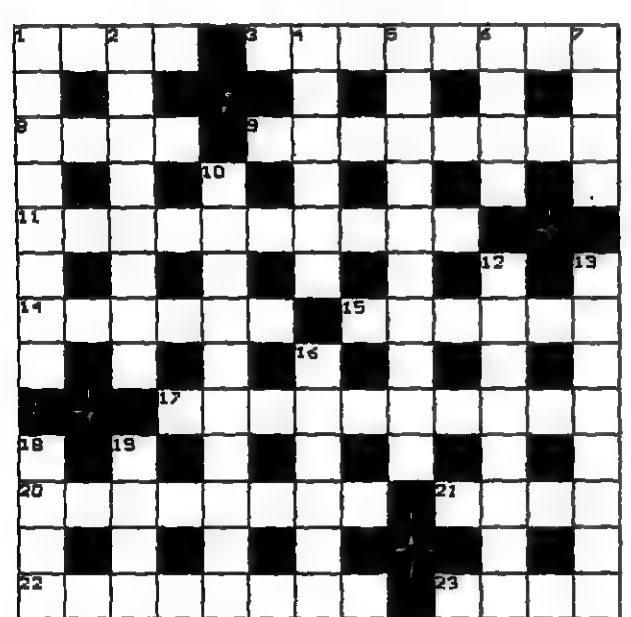
If the manager abides by that judgment he will do so only with sharp regret, for he and Smith are each in need of a talisman. In Paul Gascoigne, Rangers possess just such a figure. The Englishman has been influential in those seven unbeaten meetings with Celtic and Smith was able to brush aside all the tedious inquiries about the player's mood.

"Old Firm games have not been a problem for Gascoigne," Smith said. Celtic have still to show that they possess a comparable force in their side. Pierre van Hooijdonk will play and Andreas Thom may also take part, but it is a newer signing, Paolo di Canio, who seems, after Lazio, Juventus, Napoli and AC Milan, to be relishing life at a club where no one overshadows him.

He has thrived on Celtic's dependence and, in the Old Firm games, the players who are stimulated by an intimidating fixture are precious. Laudrup, when asked about the significance of Gascoigne, gave a proud reply that summed up the outlook required: "I don't need anyone to inspire me. I inspire myself."

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 939 in association with BRITISH MIDLAND



- ACROSS**
- (Consonant) string instrument (4)
 - Lines read across and down (8)
 - A visionary (4)
 - Clothes cupboard (8)
 - Everyday language (10)
 - Inequitable (6)
 - Give aid (6)
 - One-off poll (2-8)
 - Quarantined (8)
 - Airborne soldier (4)
 - Forsaken, wretched (8)
 - Dispatch (4)
- DOWN**
- Volcano near Naples (8)
 - Play trump on trump (8)
 - Hired applauders (6)
 - Mutual-favour system (3,4,3)
 - Seized; a Hobbit family (4)
 - Music-pitch symbol (4)
 - Double partition with gap (6,4)
 - Make less harsh (8)
 - Norm: flag (8)
 - Customer of eg lawyer (6)
 - Clement (4)
 - Stud: a superior (4)

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Post your entry to Times Two Crossword, PO Box 6886, London E2 8SP to arrive by next Monday. The winners' names and solution will appear on Wednesday.

Name/Address

SOLUTION TO NO 938
ACROSS: 6 Charade 7 Lotus 9 Bible 10 Ikebana 11 Olive branch 14 Double-edged 17 Averaged 19 Ravel 21 Decoy 22 Rudyard
DOWN: 1 Barb 2 Materiel 3 Revive 4 Glue 5 Strained 6 Cuba 8 Swathe 11 Opulence 12 Rag trade 13 Edward 15 Endure 16 Slid 18 Goya 20 Veal



Greg Rusedski, the Great Britain No 2, served up little to excite the spectators at the national tennis championships in Telford yesterday, but was still too strong for James Fox, ranked No 16, whom he beat in straight sets. Report, page 46

Catalans use football as route to achieve their ultimate goal

SPAIN'S Catalan nationalists have taken their battle for autonomy to the football terraces this week, demanding a separate team for Catalonia — just like Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland — in time for the World Cup finals of 2002.

Although highly unlikely to succeed in the short term, the demand is the most populist expression of Catalan "separatism" to date. Speaking on behalf of his party recently, Ricard Barba, a senior Catalan nationalist member of parliament, declared that "a football team for Catalonia, which takes part in international competitions, can be delayed no longer."

Senior Barba said: "Scotland and Wales can field their own football teams in the World Cup. The Danish dependent territory of the Faeroe Islands can compete in its own right and has even played against Spain. I do not see why Catalonia should not have its own side, with its own flag and national anthem. We must look at these matters objectively. There should be no taboos against a Catalan team."

Predictably, the Spanish Secretary of State for Sports, Pedro Antonio Martin, described the Catalan demands as "inopportune and unnecessary".

Tunku Varadarajan on a region's fight for recognition through sport

THE Romanian referee at the centre of allegations of match-fixing against Aberdeen 12 years ago, denied any involvement yesterday. Uefa, the governing body of European football, confirmed that it had asked the Portuguese Football Association to investigate allegations that Fernando Barata, the former director of a Portuguese club, acted as go-between for FC Porto in a bribery attempt before the match, a European Cup Winners' Cup semi-final, loan Igna, the referee said to be implicated, insisted: "I could not possibly have known this Barata."

Uefa investigates match-fixing claim

Nonetheless, observers expect that the Catalan premier will soon raise the matter of a "Catalonia Eleven" formally with the Spanish Government. Such a team, if it materialised, would initially be an unimpressive, boasting only Guardiola and Sergi from the present Spain side — and possibly Nadal, although he insists that he is Majorcan. However, as a Catalan nationalist politician put it recently: "Who cares how we do? At least it will be our team. That would be a priceless gain for the Catalan nation."

Emerson expected to return

EMERSON, the Middlesbrough midfielder player, will be back on Teesside for training today, according to his club and Gianni Paladini, his agent in England.

Emerson, the subject of much transfer speculation, failed to return from a holiday in his native Brazil yesterday, but Dave Allan, a Middlesbrough spokesman, said: "We arranged Emerson's flight back from Brazil and are confident he will be here."

Bryan Robson, the manager of the FA Carling Premiership club, said that Emerson must honour his four-year contract. "Emerson will not be leaving the club," Robson said. "In fact, no one is leaving unless I decide it is in our best interests."

The threat of a strike by Nationwide League players is expected to be officially ended today. The Professional Footballers' Association is thought to have agreed a deal with the Football League that will see it being given £1.2 million a year for the next five years.

Terry Fenwick, the Portsmouth manager, has been fined £500 for comments made to Martin Bodenham, the referee, after their Coca-Cola Cup second-round tie against Wimbledon at Fratton Park on September 25.

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Nations vow to reduce starvation by half in 20 years

FROM RICHARD OWEN
AND FRANCESCO BONGARRA
IN ROME

THE United Nations World Food Summit yesterday vowed to fight famine, halving the number of hungry and malnourished people within 20 years, but was overshadowed by the more immediate crisis in Zaire, which has been forced on to the agenda. Boutros Boutros

Ghali, the UN Secretary-General, issued an emotional plea for "collective help" for more than a million refugees "facing certain death" in eastern Zaire.

The five-day summit is being attended by 194 nations, but only 50 are represented by heads of state or government. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), which is hosting the meeting at its palatial headquarters in Rome,

had hoped for at least 100. Few Western leaders are attending, apart from Alain Juppé, the French Prime Minister.

The summit, the culmination of two and a half years' preparation, has been marked by what *Corriere della Sera* called "organisational chaos and Levantine confusion".

Professor Romano Prodi, the Italian Prime Minister, was elected chairman, with President Cas-

tro of Cuba, who is expected to arrive today, as one of six deputies. Señor Castro is due to meet the Pope, paving the way for a papal visit to Havana. In an apparent nod to Cuba, the Pope, who opened the summit, criticised "trade embargoes imposed without sufficient reasoning".

The gathering adopted a declaration deploring the use of food "as an instrument for political and

economic pressure" and enshrining "the right of everyone to access to safe and nutritious food". It undertook to halve the number of hungry people from the present 840 million by 2015. FAO officials said that some delegates had submitted "written reservations" but gave no details.

Zaire was not on the summit agenda, but is to be addressed today. Dr Boutros Ghali said:

"From this platform, from this Eternal City, I make a solemn appeal to peoples and states to take part — all of them — in the collective action we will undertake in the Great Lakes region to help men, women and children who have lost everything and who face certain death unless they receive immediate assistance."

Clearly angered by suggestions that the summit was a "talking

shop" organised by an overfed UN bureaucracy, Jacques Dipol, the FAO Director-General, said the agency's budget was "less than what nine developed countries spend on dog and cat food in six days, and less than 5 per cent of what the inhabitants of just one developed country spend on slimming products every year."

Leading article, page 23
VINCENTO PINTO/REUTERS

Seventies dream of world with no hunger destroyed by conflict

BY RICHARD OWEN

OFFICIALS at the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) do not much like to be reminded of the last United Nations food summit 22 years ago, when Henry Kissinger rose to his feet and vowed with a rhetorical flourish that world hunger would be eradicated "within ten years".

For Kay Killingsworth, the American running this summit as the organisation's Secretary-General, the 1974 vow was "laudable but Utopian". The right to "food security", as UN jargon has it, is a "national responsibility", she says, but with world bodies, aid agencies and private enterprise helping governments to feed their own people.

There are some signs in other words that some bureaucrats at the FAO, a vast and pampered UN agency which occupies Mussolini's former Colonial Africa Ministry near the Colosseum, realise the rhetoric of the 1970s is outdated. Although Zaire is a prime example of the plight of the starving, it also illustrates the fact that — as Dan Glickman, the US Agriculture Secretary, pointed out yesterday — war and ethnic civil strife is

the "immediate cause of hunger and malnutrition" in much of the Third World.

The green revolution has trebled grain and rice yields in Asia, and many of the dire predictions of 1974 remain unfulfilled. "The market has a way of responding to demand," one trade expert said. "The more mouths there are to feed, the more the food companies want to fill them."

Mr Glickman said the United States was "the leading supplier of food to the world, as well as food aid". Domestic US market reforms have unleashed the full potential of American agriculture. Our farmers now plant for world demand.

The FAO repeats the UN orthodoxy that the world will have to produce 75 per cent more food over the next three decades to feed the world population as it rises inexorably from nearly six billion to about nine billion. Partly because China, the world's most populous country, is slowly shifting from a rice culture to a grain culture, "world grain stocks have dwindled to dangerously low levels, highlighting the fragility of food

supplies". Wheat yields have risen in the West but remain static in the Third World.

The FAO also admits, however, that the world produces enough to ensure "adequate food" for all (at 2,700 calories a person a day). The percentage of chronically undernourished people has been cut to a fifth of the global population, partly thanks to the green revolution, with increased crop yields, boosted by fertilisers, pesticides and improved irrigation.

Some areas have slid backwards: sub-Saharan Africa, for example, "produces less food per person than it did 30 years ago", and the number of undernourished people has doubled to 200 million since 1970. The FAO sees a future of "more intensive agriculture and increased yields", coupled with food aid.

For the aid agencies, the fault lies partly with war and civil strife, fuelled by the Western arms industry, but mainly with International Monetary Fund and World Bank loans, which encourage Third World debt. Lester Brown, the head of WorldWatch, the environmental pressure group, identifies popu-

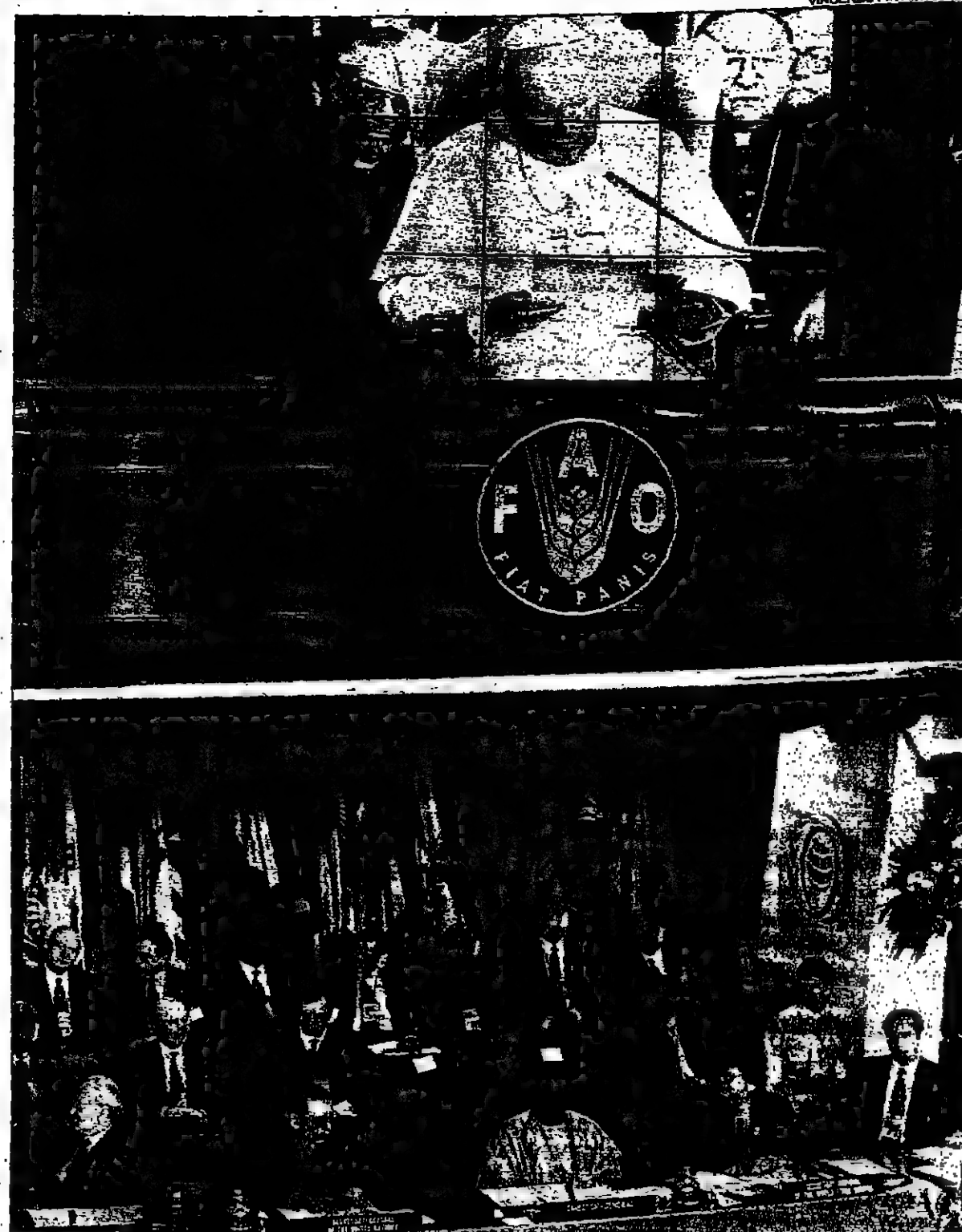
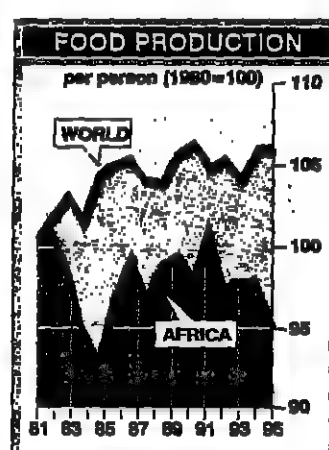
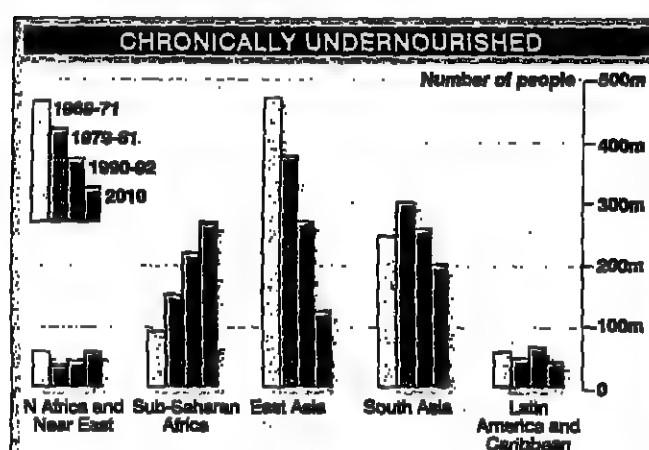
lation growth as the real issue, particularly in a more affluent Asia. The FAO is "overstating food production and misleading political leaders", Mr Brown said. "For the first time in history the oceanic fish catch and the grain harvest per person are both declining. In each of the past three years, we consumed more than we produced, drawing on depleted grain stocks which will not be rebuilt." Since the green revolution was unlikely to be repeated, and asking the affluent to eat less was "not politically feasible", the only answer was birth control.

The summit's opening day was marked by controversy over whether chronic hunger could be alleviated by population control. In an echo of the dispute between the Vatican and the United States at the Cairo population conference two years ago, the Pope said attempts to pin the blame for famine on over-population were sophistry. "Demography alone cannot explain inadequate distribution of food resources," the Pope declared. "We must put aside the sophist view that when there are many, one is condemned to be poor."

Many at the FAO and the aid agencies are stuck in a 1970s rut, while the Americans have arrived in Rome with a more robust message from the Clinton Administration: if the Kissingeresque utopianism of the 1970s is behind us, then the solution is only partly "voluntary" birth control, and only partly food aid.

Mr Glickman said "rapid population growth" was a "contributing factor" to famine along with civil strife, but avoided a direct clash with the Vatican. He said America was "monitoring" rising grain consumption in Asia, especially China.

According to the Americans, prosperous free traders, not aid agencies, will create the grain reserve the world needs for future food security.



The Pope appears on a giant screen at the opening of the UN World Food Summit in Rome yesterday

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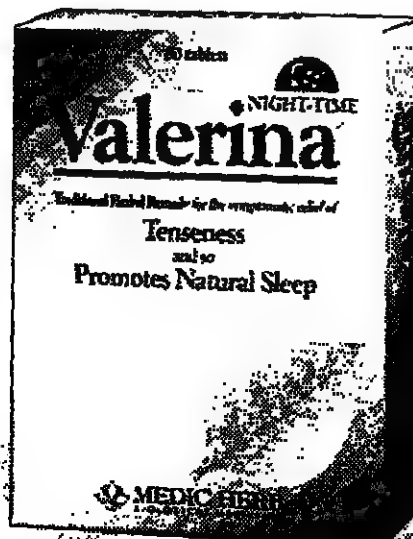
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0511 15150

Minister tried to block Paris sleaze inquiry

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

THE French Government sent a helicopter to scour the Himalayas for a French magistrate on holiday after his rebellious deputy opened a politically sensitive judicial investigation into the wife of the Paris Mayor.

Jacques Toubon, the French Justice Minister, ordered diplomats in Nepal to charter a helicopter in an attempt to locate Laurent Davenas, a senior prosecutor, and order him back to Paris to block the inquiry, the weekly magazine *Le Canard Enchaîné* reported yesterday.

The allegations have raised fresh doubts over the independence of the French judiciary and suggest that the Government is prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to quash damaging corruption investigations.

The case concerns long-running suspicions that Xavier Tiberi, the wife of Jean Tiberi, was massively overpaid from public funds for producing a short advisory brief for a local council.

Judge Davenas, who has a



Toubon ordered helicopter search

reputation for treating political scandal cases with "sensitivity", disagreed with his deputy, Hubert Dujardin, over whether the allegations against Mme Tiberi were serious enough to merit a full investigation. Judge Dujardin has since said he believed Judge Davenas would bury the case and so waited until his boss was away trekking in the Himalayas before launching an investigation.

The inquiry may lead to

Mme Tiberi being placed under formal investigation and could result in prosecution. When Judge Dujardin's intention to launch an investigation became clear at the end of last month, the Justice Ministry, "in a panic", decided that Judge Davenas must be recalled from holiday to replace his deputy, according to *Le Canard*.

On November 1, France's Ambassador in Kathmandu was reportedly instructed to find the judge. A helicopter was chartered but after three hours of fruitless searching, at a cost of £2,000 to the French taxpayer, the hunt was abandoned.

The messages eventually reached Judge Davenas in the mountains, but these were so extravagantly urgent that he believed they were a joke on the part of fellow trekkers, and ignored them.

The Government has not denied the report but the Justice Ministry said it had no helicopters, a somewhat lame response since the aircraft in question was hired from a

local Nepalese pilot identified as Bikas Rana.

M. Tiberi, a prominent member of the ruling Gaullist RPR party, is a close ally of President Chirac, his predecessor as Mayor of Paris.

Mme Tiberi was allegedly paid 200,000 francs (£25,000) by the council of the Essonne region near Paris to write a 36-page advisory brief, which was rife with spelling mistakes, exceptionally dull and allegedly plagiarised. The report was unearthed by another investigative magistrate during a raid on the Mayor's Paris home last July.

Mme Tiberi is said to be the latest member of the family to attract the attention of French prosecutors. The Mayor is under investigation for allegedly ordering the refurbishment of a city-owned flat for his son, Dominique Tiberi, at a cost of more than £200,000.

Last month it emerged that Dominique Tiberi had been paid by the state-owned Air France for nearly three years after he left the company to become a ministerial aide.



Xavier Tiberi, the latest member of the Tiberi family to face sleaze allegations

Rioting spreads in French colony

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

RIOTERS in French Guiana fought paramilitary police, flown from Paris, well into the early hours of yesterday as a wave of violence gripped France's impoverished territory on the northeastern coast of South America.

The latest upsurge of violence came after the conviction of seven people arrested during last week's riots in Cayenne, the territory's capital.

More than 200 French riot police, brought in last week-end after local police were overwhelmed, used baton charges and teargas to break up gangs of youths who threw petrol bombs, smashed windows and looted a weapons shop.

The riots were initially provoked by school pupils demonstrating against poor conditions. The unrest has since grown into action by well-organised, and in some cases armed, groups. So far the riots have caused one death, at least a dozen injuries and a huge amount of damage.



Salman Rushdie and Poul Nyrup Rasmussen at Christiansborg Castle yesterday

Rushdie arrives for prize

FROM CHRISTOPHER FOLLETT IN COPENHAGEN

AMID some of the stiffest security seen in post-war Denmark, Salman Rushdie, the British author, arrived yesterday in Copenhagen to receive his share of the European Union's £25,000 Aristeio Literature Prize at a ceremony in the Ark Museum of Modern Art, a new seafood arts complex south of the capital.

Mr Rushdie's visit came after a U-turn by the Danish Government of Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, the Prime Minister, which banned him on security grounds only to change its mind last week in

the face of an avalanche of domestic and international protest. The prize was also awarded to Christoph Ransmayr, of Austria, and the Danish translator Thorild Bjørn, Copenhagen hosted the ceremony in its capacity as European Cultural Capital for 1996.

The Danish Government's misunderstanding of Mr Rushdie's visit caused a furore in a country that prides itself on its human rights record and has long been a leading champion of his fight against the death sentence pronounced on him

by Tehran. Mr Rushdie has visited Denmark three times before, the last time time a year ago to promote his book *The Moor's Last Sign*.

The original Danish rebuttal, attacked by Mr Rushdie as "political cowardice", was on the ground that the Government was unable to guarantee protection. The ban sparked opposition calls for a no-confidence motion against the Social Democratic-led minority Government, threatening to topple it. The Government faces a stormy parliamentary debate on the issue today.

Belarus in missile threat to Nato

FROM THOMAS DE WAAL IN MOSCOW

IN AN aggressive speech to the Russian parliament yesterday Aleksandr Lukashenko, the President of Belarus, summoned up ghosts of the Cold War when he called for rapid reunification with Russia and threatened to use his remaining nuclear missiles as a bargaining chip with Nato.

Belarus, with Kazakhstan and Ukraine, had promised to dismantle all nuclear weapons and ship them to Russia by the end of the year. So far the republic has not started to do so. Announcing that "about a dozen" SS20 missiles remain on his territory, Mr Lukashenko said their future depended on the course of Nato enlargement into Eastern Europe. "I hate to think that the situation might occur that the removal of missiles from Belarusian territory will coincide with the deployment of nuclear missiles and warheads on the territory of new Nato members," he said.

He delighted the Communist-dominated state Duma by saying that he wanted a new "strategic partnership" with Russia that might mature into "reunification". Russia and Belarus, the most Russified of the former Soviet states, already have a customs union and shared border guards.

The session was boycotted by about 70 liberal members of parliament who condemn Mr Lukashenko as an emergent dictator and say integration with the backward Belarus would be a disaster for the Russian economy. Grigori Yavlinsky, the leading liberal candidate for the presidency this summer, called the speech "a political show and buffoonery", the main aim of which was to win votes in a referendum on November 24.

The referendum will decide whether Mr Lukashenko can win acceptance for a revised constitution that would give him sweeping new powers and start his five-year term afresh, extending his time in office by two years.

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Air crash inquiry begins as bullock carts recover dead

THE bodies of 351 people killed in the world's worst mid-air plane collision were recovered yesterday from the flat farmlands of Haryana. They were piled high on carts hauled by bullocks and tractors — the only vehicles able to negotiate the fields and farm tracks in the rural backwaters southwest of Delhi. The wreckage landed over an area several miles wide.

Local people began the recovery operation at the main crash site long before dawn, working by the light of oil lamps while emergency services struggled to reach the area. The bodies were taken to makeshift mortuaries to await identification. The mood was quiet and sombre. Personal possessions were scattered across the mustard and cotton fields: toys, spectacles, passports, handbags and wallets among them.

Before daybreak some relatives arrived and became hysterical at the site of bodies strewn over the fields. A man



The inquiry will focus on the use of one corridor for incoming and departing flights, writes Christopher Thomas in Delhi

walked through the carnage looking for his sister, Mumtaz; he lingered long over a disfigured corpse before deciding it was not her, and pressed on, shining a torch on the ground. People flicked through a child's diary, wondering at its one entry, in English: "Mummy to come..."

The wreckage of the Saudia Saudi Airlines Boeing 747 and the Russian-built Ilyushin-76 chartered from Kazakhstan National Airlines landed several miles apart, both narrowly missing built-up areas.

The transcript of the exchanges between the aircrew and control tower reveal nothing exceptional. There is only a brief clarification requested by the Ilyushin crew on the

separation between the two aircraft. Experts say that a height separation of 1,000ft between two airliners is not extraordinary, but Delhi is unusual in that it lets aircraft arrive and depart in the same air corridor.

Some villagers say the Saudi pilot managed to manoeuvre the aircraft away from populated areas into open fields. Others said it was completely out of control and somersaulted twice before hitting the ground. The plane crashed in the vicinity of five villages, which were engulfed in black smoke.

Residents said four people had been found alive, but died soon afterwards. Several hundred police cordoned off the

area yesterday to stop looting. The remains of the Kazakh plane, carrying 29 passengers and ten crew, crashed six miles away near Bhagwoj village. Cranes were brought in to lift the wreckage and remove bodies. Some corpses were recovered earlier by villagers and taken to a nearby

clinic by tractor. Teams of doctors arrived to begin post-mortem examinations.

The flight recorders of both aircraft were recovered and sent for immediate analysis. The Indian Civil Aviation Authority has started an investigation, and a judicial inquiry is being established.

The investigations will study complaints by air traffic controllers about the use of the same air corridor for incoming and outgoing flights, despite repeated warnings that this system could lead to disaster.

Indian Civil Aviation Ministry officials said they would

review flight safety procedures and examine complaints by pilots and air traffic controllers that the airport was ill-equipped to handle its growing traffic volume. The airport does not have secondary radar which shows air traffic control the height separating two aircraft. It is to be

introduced at Delhi next month.

After the disaster, relatives of passengers thronged Delhi airport seeking news. A traffic policeman was besieged by angry relatives when he started towing away their cars. They screamed at him to show compassion, but in vain.



Firemen inspect the smouldering wreckage of the Saudia Saudi Airlines 747 yesterday. Debris and personal possessions were spread over several miles

Kazakh plane 'was in perfect condition'

FROM RICHARD BERTON IN MOSCOW

KAZAKH airline officials said yesterday that their Ilyushin-76 cargo plane was in perfect condition when it collided with a Saudia Saudi Airways jumbo jet and insisted that the crew was competent. The Kyrgyz company that chartered the plane also denied poor safety standards in the former Soviet Union were to blame.

Among the victims of the crash were ten Kazakh crew members and 27 passengers, including 12 Russians, 12 Kyrgyz and three Kazakhs.

Idus Nazimov, vice-president of Kazakhstan National Airlines, one of hundreds of companies formed by Aeroflot's break-up, was confident "the aircraft was in good technical condition". Airline officials said the plane had been purchased only four years ago and described its technical state as "flawless". The pilot was said to have spoken fluent English.

Aidzhit Buranov, Kyrgyzstan's charge d'affaires in Delhi, said: "The crew of that plane was formed of highly skilled pilots who had repeatedly performed flights to southern and southeast Asian countries."

Ill-fated Ilyushin pilot's last words

A TRANSCRIPT of the last exchanges between the Delhi control tower and the pilots of Saudia Saudi Airlines Flight SV763 and the Ilyushin-76 of Kazakhstan Airlines Flight KZA1907:

Kazakh: Good evening, 1907. Passing through 230 (25,000ft) for 180 (18,000 ft), 74 miles from DPN (Delhi).

Control Tower: Descend 150 (15,000ft). Report reading. Kazakh: One-five-zero (15,000ft).

Saudia: Approaching 100 (10,000ft). Control Tower: Cleared 140 (14,000ft).

Saudia: Approaching level 140 (14,000ft) for higher. Control Tower: Maintain level 140 (14,000ft).

Control Tower: KZA1907 Report distance from DPN. Kazakh: Reached 150 (15,000ft) 46 miles DPN.

Control Tower: Roger. Maintain 150 (15,000ft). Identified traffic 12 o'clock reciprocal. Saudia Boeing 747, 14 miles.

Kazakh: Kazakh 1907. Report how many miles? Control Tower: 14 miles now.

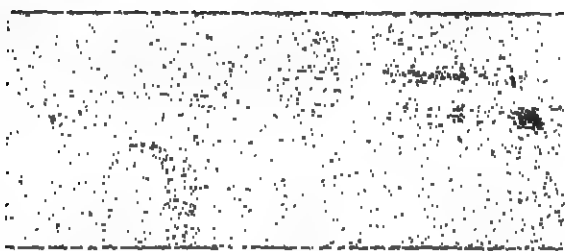
Control Tower: Traffic in 13 miles, level 140 (14,000ft). Kazakh: 1907.

After a minute-long silence, the two planes collided. (AP)

Lemon Yellow



Royal Blue



Brick Red



Prussian Blue



Barium Yellow



Pastel Pink



Peacock Blue



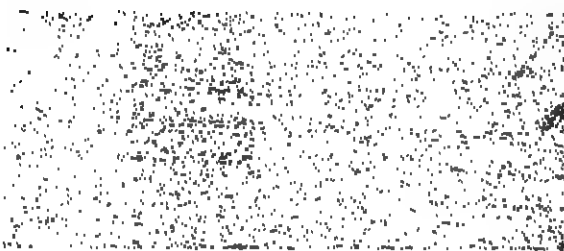
Oyster Beige



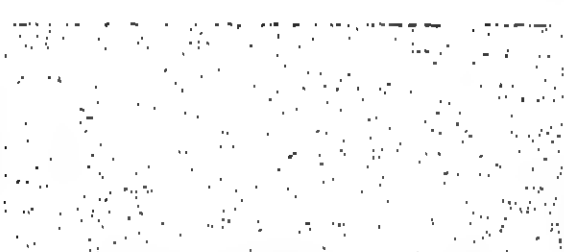
Burnt Sienna



Light Mauve



Minty Green



Hot Pink



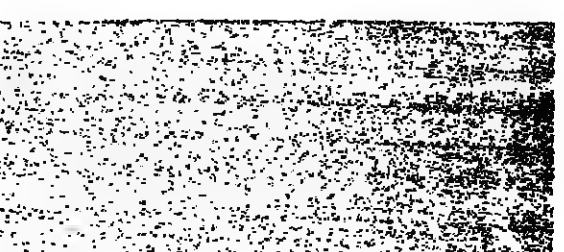
Mid Blue



Dale Green



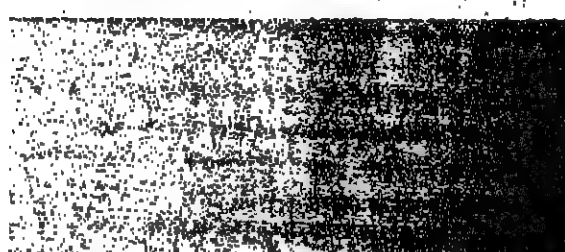
Saddle Brown



Glacier Blue



Bright Lime



Chrome Orange



Imperial Purple



Sky Blue



Marine Green



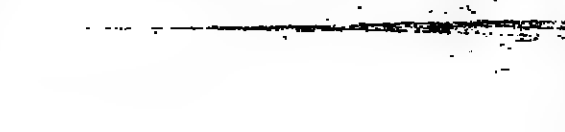
Soft Peach



Grey Green



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*Source: Fisheries, 1992, "Seal Report", Fisheries and Aquaculture Canada, May 21, 1994. **Source: DFO, 1994 Seal Census Report - Newfoundland Region, May 21, 1994.



0511 15150

Refugees scramble for food as Western diplomats weigh up options for military intervention

Zaire rebels defy French as forces await UN orders

HUTU militia continued to shell civilian areas in Goma from their refugee camp yesterday as Paris offered to send 600 paratroopers in a move calculated to enrage the rebels who hold the city.

André Kissasse, the military commander of the rebels who have taken eastern Zaire's North and South Kivu provinces, welcomed proposals for an international military force to go to Rwandan Hutu refugee camps, but he reiterated his demand that France should take no part in the operation.

"They are not impartial in this region. We cannot accept French troops here. We would prevent them from coming, we will fire on any French troops who come here and physically resist them," he said.

French participation would be certain to stymie a military intervention to save Hutu refugees, threatened with cholera and held back from returning home by their own leaders, as Rwanda has also insisted that no French troops take part in the operation.



Paris's paratroopers are ready to save desperate refugees but face bitter military opposition, Sam Kiley reports from Goma

Some of the earlier rounds falling on Goma may have been part of shipments to the Hutu extremists organised by France during 1995, in defiance of an arms embargo imposed that year on all sides in the Rwandan civil war.

France said yesterday that it was prepared to send the 600 paratroopers to Zaire within 24 hours of United Nations approval for a multinational force to help starving refugees, and to have 600 more there a day later, defence officials in Paris said.

Army officers said the first French detachment to go would be from the 8th Marine Infantry Parachute Regiment (8e RPIMa) based in Castres, southwestern France. The second 600 men, who could be in Zaire within

48 hours of receiving orders, would be from a sister regiment, the 3rd RPIMa, also made up of professionals with vast experience in Africa.

The troops would be flown from France with weapons, rations and ammunition for several days. Armoured personnel carriers could be flown in from the Central African Republic. The French offer comes at a particularly delicate stage in the establishment of an international force, as countries who have offered troops do not know what their mission will be.

Ray Wilkinson, the spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, said he had hoped military intervention would not be necessary, but that if troops were sent to Zaire, they should be



A woman fights for food supplies at an aid depot in Goma yesterday. Several people were hurt in the crush

given the task of separating civilian refugees from members of the Hutu militia which carried out the 1994 genocide of a million Tutsis and Hutu moderates in Rwanda. "We have been calling for some kind of intervention against these people since 1994. But

the international community refused proposals from Boutros Boutros Ghali (the UN Secretary-General). This has come incredibly late," Mr Wilkinson said in Goma yesterday.

Relief agencies have taken a similar line, indicating a

growing consensus that if foreign troops are sent to eastern Zaire they should have the right to use force to arrest members of the Interhamwe (the Hutu militia) and the former Rwandan Army.

Yesterday the rebel commander said there would be

no need for any troops to be sent to eastern Zaire if this was not the mission of foreign soldiers. "I don't see why they would have to have guns if they were not going to separate the Interhamwe. All aid organisations are welcome to travel through our territory."

Uganda kills three in border attack

FROM REUTERS IN KAMPALA

UGANDA said yesterday that it killed three Zairean soldiers after the troops, backed by Zaire-based Ugandan dissidents, attacked two south-western border posts.

In a statement in the name of the Ugandan Cabinet, Martin Aliter, the Minister of State for International Co-operation, said Uganda had repulsed the "enemy" and the Zairean soldiers and Ugandan dissidents retreated into Zaire from where they shelled Ugandan positions all day.

"The Government of Uganda wishes it to be known that there were two armed attacks on its territory this morning. An army platoon was attacked at Karambi, which is four miles northwest of Bwera. Another attack was at Mpondwe border post.

"These are two border trading centres between Uganda and Zaire in the southwest of Uganda. At Mpondwe, the enemy was repulsed, we killed three attackers," the statement said.

It added that Uganda had reinforced its positions.

Israeli ex-justice chief faces perjury charge

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

THREE Israeli government figures are facing trial for alleged corruption, prompting reshuffles of Benjamin Netanyahu's Cabinet. Charges against them, in separate trials, vary from bribe-taking to perjury.

The latest to face charges is Ya'akov Ne'eman, the former Justice Minister. He will be indicted for perjury and obstructing justice after an investigation into allegations that in 1992 he tried to persuade a witness not to testify in the trial of Ayyash Deri, the leader of Shas, an ultra-orthodox Jewish religious party. The State Attorney's office said there was not enough evidence for that charge, but

indicted him for perjury and obstruction of justice. The first count carries a maximum penalty of seven years in jail.

In the Cabinet reshuffle, Tzahi Hanegbi replaces the Justice Minister and Yehoshua Matza takes over his health portfolio.

Meanwhile, Mr Deri, now also a member of Mr Netanyahu's Government, began this week to give evidence in his own trial. He is charged with bribe-taking, fraud, breach of trust, and falsifying corporate documents.

Ehud Olmert, the Mayor of Jerusalem, who has a Likud seat in the Knesset, is accused of fraud, forgery and breach of trust.

Mandela transfers nude pose secretary

FROM INIGO GILMORE IN JOHANNESBURG

PRESIDENT MANDELA has agreed to transfer a personal secretary from his official Cape Town residence to a more discreet job at his office in the city after she posed for a pornographic magazine.

Lilian Arrison was removed from her duties at the home of the South African President when it was disclosed that she had appeared in this month's edition of *Hustler* magazine. Mr Mandela was prompted to act after news of her exposure spread swiftly and parliamentary employees expressed disgust at the full-frontal picture.

Referred to as Lily in the magazine, Ms Arrison ap-

peared as a semi-finalist in a competition for a cash prize of 10,000 rands (£1,300). In the accompanying caption, she was quoted as saying she enjoys life and sex, especially in the shower. Many will be surprised that she did not lose her job but Mr Mandela is known to be forgiving. Ms Arrison, who says she feels stifled in her new job as she can longer express herself, has accused her colleagues of being narrow-minded.

Pretoria: Mr Mandela said that at their meeting yesterday President Chibwe had made a proposal which could end an opposition boycott of elections in Zambia next week. (Reuters)

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One grope and you're out

Claims of sexual harassment have tarnished the US military's reputation, but the Pentagon is fighting back. Quentin Letts reports

This week's allegations of violent sexual abuse at a US Army training base, the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, have revived a nightmare for the US Armed Forces. Twenty instructors, mostly rough-hewn, square-bashing drill sergeants, have been accused of a catalogue of horrible deeds, from sodomy and rape to the sexual bullying of female recruits. The nightmare is the 1991 Tailhook scandal, when a mob of US Navy officers ran out of control at a Las Vegas convention, ripping blouses and bras off women's backs before jeering with derision. After Tailhook the navy became the favoured target for America's liberals, women's rights groups, and allied progressives. Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Frank Kelso retired early. But much of the criticism was taken personally by Admiral J. "Mike" Boorda, who succeeded him, and when Boorda was later skewered on a minor decorations infringement, he committed suicide. Harassment?

The US Army's initial response to the breaking of the Aberdeen Proving Ground has been more adroit than that of the navy in 1991. The Army Secretary,



Frank Kelso, left, and J. "Mike" Boorda

Togo West, has gone on television to give direct, no-nonsense interviews. "Sodomy or not, the responsibility is on the NCOs not to get romantically involved with recruits," he declared. Generals were wheeled out to condemn the alleged crimes. The army launched an immediate investigation into sexual harassment.

Once again, alleged wrongdoing by a handful of men threatens to undo the reputation of the best-equipped fighting force ever to march on earth. But the army's response suggests that the military men have awoken to the fact that this is a political battle. Hence it is talking about unravelling. While one might justifiably question the wisdom of women being trained by men and alongside men, the Pentagon is feeling folk's pain and talking in the dialects of political correctness.

Suspensions of harassment always seem to lead to hip-shooting polemics about the macho culture of the military. Politicians believe that decorated officers should lose their careers on account of sloppy comments about the cost of a tart. A fighter-pilot fraternity in Alaska is held up for public disgrace because its members pride themselves on their womanising. The media lap it all up. Sex-in-uniforms is always good for sales.

Barely had the army announced its investigation this week than congresswoman Patricia Schroeder, a long-serving Democrat, claimed that the military had a "wink-wink" attitude to harassment. Commentators called for top brass to lose their jobs, even before the ink was dry on the court-martial summonses.

The allegations at the Aberdeen Proving Ground are troubling. Tailhook was a disgrace. But in other instances one suspects that the US military is taking criticism because it is an establishment that liberals enjoy baiting. Tailhook, which occurred soon after the notorious Anita Hill-Judge Clarence Thomas hearings, confirmed sexual harassment as a "hot button" political issue. Ms Hill claimed that she had been sexually harassed by Judge Clarence Thomas. She



Filming from life. Tailhook was the subject of a television movie and the navy became a focal point for protest groups

split the nation and Judge Thomas's reputation took a mauling.

Corporate America awoke to the danger of copycat lawsuits. "Ambulance-chasing" attorneys tout for business and sue on a shared-damages basis. Sexual harassment claims are rising at 29 per cent. Add this fever to a liberal dislike of the military, and you have an explosive mix.

The prominent conservative, Robert Bork, sees the rise of women in the military as little less than a feminist campaign against the Armed Forces. In his new book *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*, Judge Bork argues that female soldiers have weakened morale and dimmed Uncle Sam's military might. His views are shared by many military officers, who fear that politicians who have never eaten campo rations or seen the dirty end of a foxhole are not the right people to formulate military policy.

Civilian companies have learnt to defuse lawsuits by ensuring that employees "go on courses". But military people are awkward souls. They are clumsy about the paraphernalia of modern management. Soldiers are not, on the whole, natural tree huggers, nor terribly good at group bonding sessions. Nor are

non-commissioned officers highly sensitive flowers. If they were, they probably would not be much good at chiselling fighting men out of soft-palmed recruits.

Monica Ballard, a Californian sex harassment expert, said: "It is hard for governmental bodies to encourage communication. They are used to people being told 'right, you will do this or you will be forced to do 100 press-ups'." She fears that some schemes can do more harm than good. "If you tell people you can't do this or you will be fired" it can create antagonism."

Thomas Pison, Professor of Human Resource Management at Mercy College, New York, has advised the army on sexual harassment for 15 years and praises the way the military has responded. "The military are stereotyped as sexist, patriarchal, authoritarian, but in fact the army has adapted better than many corporations," he said, citing the introduction of a "zero tolerance" rule, which applies to the army and navy. One grope and you're out.

The military have also reduced drunkenness, which was often to blame. "When

I started it was common to go to an officers' club for lunch and for it to be a three-martini affair," said Professor Pison. "Nowadays, officers' clubs are more like Quaker boot camps. I fear they may have gone overboard the other way."

Harassment is unquestionably a problem, but things are improving. A recent survey of 47,000 uniformed personnel found that 78 per cent of the women (and 38 per cent of men) said they had received unwelcome sexual attention from a colleague in the past year. However, the same survey also showed that the much-harpooned US Navy was doing a good job in making people more aware. Seventy-one per cent of naval women said the problem was on the wane.

And the lessons for our own boys? They must swallow their distaste and admit past mistakes. Watch the drink, and adopt that zero-tolerance rule on peeing. Ribald nicknames do not help, and some regimental traditions, alas, should probably be decommissioned. They should also take a deep breath and do the American thing: counselling. Toe-curling it may be, but it will provide that most vital of strategies: covering fire, from politicians, lawyers and the press.

Joe Joseph on better ways to settle a tiff



"Mrs Merton" with her new boyfriend, left, and ex-husband Peter Hook

The argument for celebrity fighting

Who would have thought that a fist-fight between Mrs Merton's estranged husband and her current boyfriend at the launch of a new restaurant would prove a more spectacular ringside draw than Tyson versus Holyfield?

Everybody knows how stupid it is if, when you get ruled by someone at a party or in a bus queue, you automatically punch out wildly without thinking. Intelligent adults know that hitting is a last resort, to be taken only after calmly considering all key factors in the dispute, such as whether the other guy is likely to hit back and whether he can out-sprint you if you make a run for it.

But when it happens, even pacific people, the kind who wince when they crack open a boiled egg, can become mesmerised. A pub brawl flashes into life faster than a Swan Vesta, hypnotising even appalled onlookers. When the brawlers are celebrities, the onlookers spread well beyond the ringside with the help of a gawping national press.

This is why so many newspapers yesterday ran such prominent stories about this week's clash between the former and current lovers of Caroline Hook, the young comedienne who came to fame as the cheeky chat-show granny, Mrs Merton.

The two men met at the launch of Bill Wyman's new Sticky Fingers restaurant in Manchester. A verbal spat escalated into a physical one, during which Ms Hook was accidentally kicked in the stomach by her husband, before the men were prised apart.

It was messy, but at least it's over. Isn't this better than the festering feuds and vendettas nursed over decades by the chattering classes? Anna Ford once tossed white wine over Jonathan Aitken after being jettisoned from TV-am, but that was a long time ago. Since then enemies have mostly just fumed.

Maybe it is time that society reverted to the arranged duel, allowing famous people to settle their differences once and for all without boring the nation senseless with their endless sniping in saloons to gossip columnists. Max Clifford could at last find a useful role for himself as the Don King or Frank Warren of the celebrity world.

Instead of peppering all those paparazzi-filled parties with his clients, he could arrange for two famous people to settle their tiff with a punch-up at Quaglin's at 10pm sharp. Think of the publicity his clients would get, and the extra custom for Quaglin's.

If Bob Geldof and Paula Yates have a bone to pick with each other, let them pick it at Marco Pierre White's pricey restaurant at the Hyde Park Hotel: that would spare us all the latest twists in their mutual loathing that fills the newspapers. It might also save them the cost of settling their dispute in court. A similar arrangement would have suited Julia and Will Carling.

Ian Botham would have avoided his enormous legal bill if, instead of suing Imran Khan, he had just asked a leading sports promoter to broker a duel in one of the bars at Lords. No more blicky remarks in Parliament between Eurosceptics and Europhiles: instead a no-holds-barred bout between Bill Cash and Ted Heath in Annie's Bar. A.A. Gill, the journalist whose debut novel was recently savaged by reviewers as puerile drivel, could select a suitable Bloomsbury dining room in which to take on his critics.

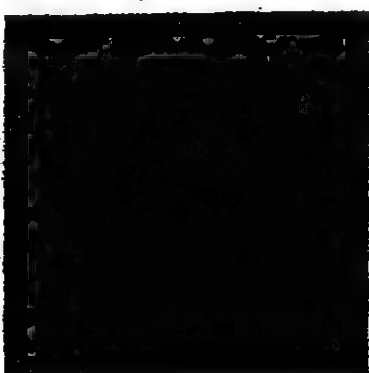
Gianni Versace and Giorgio Armani, who bicker about who is the cleverer couturier, could eat Italian food at London's River Cafe before pricking each other with sewing needles: a true needle match.

At first sight, a tussle between the revered Albanian nun, Mother Teresa, and her constant biffer, Christopher Hitchens, looks one-sided. Hitchens vilified her in his documentary *Hell's Angel* before attacking her further in his book *The Missionary Position*, in which he dubbed her "an anti-abortionist zealot" who lends her "saintly rubber stamp" to tyrants from Albania's Enver Hoxha to Papa Doc Duvalier. He's also much beefier than she is. But then again, she's got God on her side and often prays: "Deliver me, O Jesus! From the fear of being despised! From the fear of being calumniated! From the fear of being ridiculed." Frankly, Hitchens is probably too scared to enter the ring.

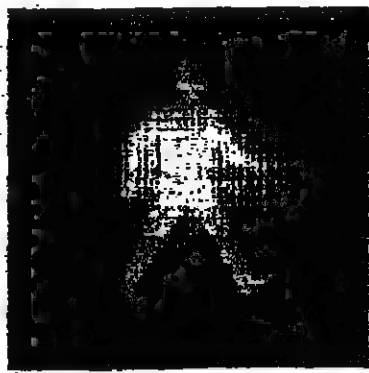
All those tiffs between Damon Hill and Michael Schumacher, between the feuding sibling novelists A.S. Byatt and Margaret Drabble, between Gore Vidal and almost anyone, they could come to an end with a timely duel.

Sadly, this breakthrough has all come too late for what would have been the fiercest encounter of them all: a tag wrestling match between Anne Diamond and Nick Owen of the BBC's *Good Morning* against their sofa rivals Judy Finnigan and Richard Madeley from Granada. Now that's the sort of daytime television that even Isaiah Berlin would watch.

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Thwarting the new star chamber

Heseltine's committee rules
Whitehall, says Sue Cameron

Whitehall is agog. Officials in all departments are watching to see if Michael Heseltine's disfigurement over Civil Service impartiality will undermine one of the most powerful committees ever seen in British government.

Mr Heseltine's embarrassment at being prevented from using civil servants to help to promote Conservative government policies in the run-up to the election has caused glee throughout Whitehall. What is in question is whether this will weaken the authority that the Deputy Prime Minister exercises through his chairmanship of the Economic and Domestic Coordination and Presentation Committee. This is attended by top Tory party officials and by senior civil servants. Until now its writ has run throughout Whitehall.

Mr Heseltine wanted officials to organise cheerleaders to support Conservative policies, but Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary and head of the home Civil Service, "advised" that this would be inappropriate. Technically, even the most senior civil servant is subservient to ministers, and officials say Mr Heseltine was furious at the way Sir Robin was seen to be calling the shots.

What is not generally known is that the matter was discussed by all the Permanent Secretaries — the Civil Service heads of department — at their regular Wednesday morning meeting. So the "advice" to Mr Heseltine enabled Whitehall to send a warning signal to the Tories and a reassuringly impartial one to Labour.

"Why didn't someone with the seniority and experience of Heseltine put the request for cheerleaders through Cabinet or through the political advisors?" one senior official asked. This would have caused no problem. Civil servants would have supplied ministers or their advisers with the names of people supporting government policies: what outraged them was the idea that they personally should round up potential Tory propagandists.

Mr Heseltine's committee meets every day at 8.30 am. Those present have access to Cable-net, the electronic diary listing all ministerial engagements and government events. Mr Heseltine presides, sitting in his great chair at one end of the room. At his left hand sit the civil servants. Opposite Mr Heseltine sits a contingent from Conservative Central Office, including Brian Mahon, the party chairman, and Charles Lewington, the Tories' director of public affairs. On Mr Heseltine's right sit the men who manage the Tories' parliamentary machine: Alastair Goodlad, the chief whip, Tony Newton, Lord President of the Council, Roger Freeman, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and — of course — David Willetts, the Paymaster-General.

Mr Willetts started out as a Treasury official. Now under a cloud because of his efforts to manipulate the Commons' inquiry into cash-for-questions.

he was brought into Mr Heseltine's committee to sharpen it up and act as gopher. It is he who phones officials to find out what line they are taking on policy and presentation.

Whenever they have a major policy announcement to make, ministers are grilled by this committee about timing, whether they have backbenchers on board and what the follow through is going to be. In effect this committee sits on Whitehall's shoulder, and the civil servants hate it.

Yet Whitehall has a grudging respect for the committee. Earlier co-ordinating committees were run by Willie Whitelaw and Bill Deedes (the former Tory Cabinet minister who went on to edit *The Daily Telegraph*) — both of whom are now peers. For much of John Major's premiership, similar committees have been held at the whips' offices in No 12 Downing Street. They were never as influential as this one.

"Heseltine is more ruthless and focused than anyone before," says an official. "The heart of government, the Cabinet Office, can be like a black hole — at the centre of everything and in charge of nothing. Heseltine's changed that."

Yet Mr Heseltine's carelessness over the political neutrality of civil servants may cost him dear. He has cast serious doubt on the Government's attitude towards Whitehall impartiality, almost for the first time. This summer, the Association of First Division Civil Servants raised questions about ministers' intentions to Whitehall, but a survey of its members produced barely two dozen complaints. Some were too vague to count and others showed ministers backing down at once when told they had overstepped the mark. As a result attacks on Mr Heseltine's committee, with its constitutionally dangerous mix of Whitehall civil servants and Tory party officials, have fallen on stony ground.

That may now change. Questions may be raised in Whitehall about the propriety of requests coming from Mr Heseltine's committee. As the general election draws nearer, officials anxious to display their impartiality may find that Mr Heseltine's *faur pas* has provided an excuse to distance themselves from the committee.

Yet they may not escape it for long. Labour's Peter Mandelson, a close confidante of Tony Blair, is one of the few Opposition leaders who has bothered to attack the committee, saying that it orchestrates not government information (which would be legitimate), but Tory propaganda (which is not). Yet Mr Mandelson is known to have his eye on Mr Heseltine's chair. He and his master may find no better tool for returning the Whitehall machine to their own purposes than this committee — a latterday Star Chamber suitable for 21st-century government.

A European ruling is crippling Scotland's enviable juvenile court system, says Magnus Linklater

Strasbourg's threat to Scottish children

I am no Euro-sceptic. In general I take a sanguine view of the way in which our lives have been influenced by the European Commission and the European Court of Justice. As for the European Court of Human Rights, most of its rulings have introduced an element of natural justice to British law which has been healthy. But I have learnt of one decision by the Strasbourg Court of Human Rights, whose impact is so damaging that it has rudely shaken my confidence.

The Children's Hearings system in Scotland is by far the sanest legal device I know for dealing with children in trouble — the envy of many other countries, including, I may say, England. A panel of three lay volunteers under the guidance of a "Reporter" hears cases involving children who have committed offences or who may be exposed to danger. It is a court, but it imposes no penal sanctions. Its role is essentially pre-emptive. It steps in before a child drifts into a life of crime or comes to serious harm. It can and does summon parents, children, social workers or teachers involved in a case, and listens to them all before deciding the best course of action. It is more about therapy than punishment, it is based on trust, and, above all, it works.

All that is now at serious risk, crudely undermined by a ruling of the European Court under two

sections of the Convention. Its effect has been to deprive Children's Panel members of access to the vital background information they need to decide on particular cases. Hitherto they have always been provided, in confidence, with full details of a child's background: his history of truancy, say, or his relationship with his parents. This has allowed them the insight they need to discuss the details, and reach a sensible decision. More importantly, it has frequently alerted them to the dangers a child may be in from an abusing parent, perhaps even one who may be sitting alongside it in the course of a hearing.

That information will no longer be available to them. Thanks to the European Court's ruling, which requires all documents to be available to all parties to a case, what must now happen is that a digest or "composite" of the case, prepared by a social work department, is circulated to the panel and to every member of the family

involved. It will be an edited version, restricted to the minimum information that social workers judge necessary. Panel members will not be allowed to ask the Reporter for any additional evidence unless they reconvene the case. At a stroke, a sensible system based on understanding and trust has been emasculated by bureaucracy.

Worse, it has actually exposed the children it is intended to protect to greater danger. Last week, one Children's Hearing, supplied with information by a teenage girl about the abuse she was being subjected to by her violent father, found ways round the new rules in order to prevent that information being available to the father himself. The result would have been to expose the girl to his fury and possible revenge. Thus far the hearing has managed to protect her, but it is on shaky legal ground.

Why have we not heard a murmur of complaint from Scottish Office ministers, who are rarely slow to

complain about Euro-interference? The answer is probably that they are unaware of what has happened.

The McMichael case which led to this ruling goes back to 1988. A Glasgow family involved in an adoption case had appealed to Strasbourg on the grounds that documents had been withheld from them. Whether there were good reasons or not for doing so, it meant that the whole panel system came under scrutiny. A decision was laboriously reached in 1993 and has taken three more years to work through. It lays down that every party to a Children's Hearing must have equal access to the papers. Since these often contain the opinions of social workers, details of their visits to a family home and confidential interviews, it has been decided that a digest only will be circulated. Thus, panel members who have been used to receiving bulky packages containing full background briefings, now have only a few sheets of paper. It may reduce

their reading time, but it has left most of them profoundly unhappy. Even the digest can pose a risk if circulated to every member of a family, including possibly a relative who is a child abuser. Moreover, a social worker, who may be part of the problem, can be edited out of the story without the panel knowing.

Officials are privately appalled at the damage that may now be caused to the system, though publicly they are putting a brave face on it. One Reporter tells me they are having to find ways of making the new rules work, and that they will do everything to protect children. But it is absurd that practitioners of a system that has worked perfectly well hitherto should have to resort to this kind of roundabout activity. And it is ironic that it comes just one week after the announcement of a Children's Act in Scotland, the stated aim of which is to "put the interests of the child first".

The European Convention, drawn up in 1950, does nothing of the sort. It was drafted long before the concept of children's rights was properly formulated. It is far less effective in this respect than the later United Nations Convention. But because Britain is a signatory to the European Convention, Parliament is obliged to legislate in response to the Court's judgments, which thus effectively have the force of law. As far as I can see, it is a force for the worse.

Europe isn't working

Tony Blair has yet to learn how over-regulated labour markets destroy jobs



Italians mock their Prime Minister for lying about the requirements of the single currency

With yesterday's excellent figures, British unemployment has fallen to 12.2 per cent. That is good news, but it's not so very brilliant. In the immediate post-war period, a full employment standard used to be defined as unemployment below 3 per cent. Unemployment is currently lower in the United States, Japan and in the fast-growing Asian economies, though there are no adequate statistics for China. In the unregulated second half of the last century, unemployment in Britain was below 6 per cent in three years out of four. However, the recovery in employment since 1992, when Britain left the European exchange-rate mechanism is both impressive and welcome.

It is all the more impressive because of the contrast with the other major European economies. German unemployment is now 10.6 per cent, nearly 50 per cent higher than ours. Italy's is 11.7 per cent, 60 per cent higher; France's is 12.6 per cent, more than 70 per cent higher; Spain has nominal unemployment three times ours, though the Spanish figures are not reliable. These are levels of unemployment which would in the past have signified a slump. Of course, modern welfare systems provide much better support for the unemployed, but any country which has unemployment above 10 per cent, even nowadays, suffers harsh social damage. Despite the British performance, the average level in the European Union is now higher than that.

Why has it happened? We are not doing especially well, but the European nations are doing very badly. Britain's experience since leaving the exchange-rate mechanism suggests that European unemployment is due largely to the policy of moving to a single currency, and the strict convergence criteria. The German, French, Italian and Spanish economies have all been subject to deflationary policies, at a time when their unemployment levels showed that they were already deflated. National currencies, particularly the mark and the franc, are at uncompetitive levels: this has resulted in the loss of ex-

ports, in additional imports and in overseas rather than domestic investment by European industries. The difference between German and British rates of unemployment can partly be accounted for by the export of jobs out of Germany and the import of jobs into Britain.

The Maastricht convergence aims were adopted at the start of the recession of the early 1990s: they have been pursued at a time when Europe should have been coming out of recession. In the past three years Europe ought to have enjoyed quite a rapid rate of growth. Deflation can be expected to continue, first of all in the period before the euro is introduced, and then in the early years of the euro itself. Rising unemployment naturally follows this kind of monetary deflation, as it did in 1925, when Winston Churchill returned to the gold standard at the pre-war rate.

These well-known consequences were first described by David Hume in his *Discourse of Money*, published as long ago as 1753. "A nation whose money decreases is actually, at that time, much weaker and more miserable than another nation who possesses no more money, but is on the increasing hand..." The poverty and beggary and sloth which must ensue

William Rees-Mogg

are easily foreseen." By deflating during a post-recessionary period, the European nations have impoverished themselves, making one of the classic errors of economic policy yet again. The authors of this policy cannot have read Hume or Keynes, and do not seem to know any economic history.

However, Europe's unemployment has not been caused only by the overvaluation of the mark, or by the convergence criteria, damaging though they have been. The European labour market is one of the most tightly regulated and highly taxed on earth. That is why it is so uncompetitive. British labour is much better placed, partly because the pound has been allowed to find its market level, partly because British wage rates are themselves competitive, at least in European terms, partly because our labour costs have not been heavily loaded with welfare charges, and partly because the

British labour market, though itself regrettably imperfect, is a great deal more free than those of our continental partners. If an enterprise has to be closed in Britain, it can be done at reasonable cost. That is not the case in Germany, Italy, France or Spain: their labour markets have no exit.

For these reasons, the decision by the European Court of Justice on the working-week is of central economic importance. The Commission in Brussels wants to widen the regulations, and to impose them on Britain, contrary to the opt-out, and against the will of the British Parliament. If we had the European degree of regulation, Britain would undoubtedly suffer something much closer to European levels of unemployment. Instead of going down, British unemployment would be going up.

The Labour Party has got this issue wrong every time. It supports a minimum wage, though the effect of a minimum wage is to lock the lowest paid out of the labour market. Labour supports the European use of bogus health and safety arguments to impose restrictions on us. It would like to force Britain into a European-style, highly regulated, high cost, and therefore high unemployment labour market. It would be a disaster.

Some businessmen have been won-

dering whether it would be right to support Tony Blair at the next election. Many of them like what they see of him, and feel that the Conservatives, after 17 years in office, have run out of energy and ideas. They think that democracy itself might benefit from an alternation of government at the next election. There is a good deal in these arguments. Tony Blair has done much to reform his own party — he already looks the best Labour leader in 30 years. New Labour is not just old Labour with a smiling mask. John Major's administration does not show the energy and initiative of the second, and best, Thatcher Government. Even on European issues, the Conservative record is not perfect.

Yet Tony Blair's policy of accepting labour regulation from Brussels seems to owe much more to old than to new Labour thinking. Every Labour Government since the war has reduced the freedom of the British labour market, has introduced new regulations, has raised labour costs and enlarged the role of the trade unions. As a consequence, every Labour Government has seen unemployment rise — and that was true of the pre-war Governments as well. Unemployment had risen when Labour left office in 1924, 1931, 1951, 1970 and 1979, and it was no accident. Labour regulation and trade union power destroy jobs, in Britain as well as on the continent, free and open labour markets allow jobs to be created, as they are currently being created in America.

Suppose that we did what some "good Europeans" would like, and accepted both the labour regulations and the single currency. This would herald a new deflation in order to meet the Maastricht criteria, and deflation after we joined as well. It would mean higher taxes. It would inhibit, if it did not actually reduce, labour productivity. It would discourage investment. It would raise unemployment. These are the natural consequences of Gordon Brown's policies, as they would be of Ted Heath's. Until yesterday, one could hope that Tony Blair had seen the force of these counter-arguments, but his reaction to the European Court of Justice decision makes that very doubtful. Tony Blair challenged John Major to fight the next election on this issue. It is an issue of open against regulated labour markets, of decisions from Brussels as against Westminster, of high unemployment as against job creation. If that is Labour's choice of issue, no businessman should support it. Nor should anyone who does not sincerely want to be unemployed.

Father and son

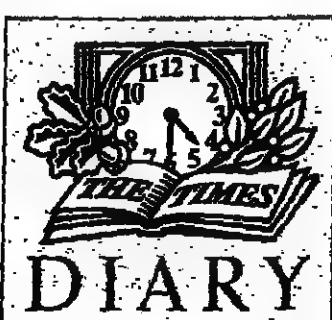
NEWS OF A second government minister being drawn into the David Willetts controversy over the cash-for-questions investigation is weighing heavily on Sir David Mitchell, wine-bibbling MP for Hampshire North West.

You see, Sir David is a member of the Standards and Privileges Committee which is conducting the investigation. And the second minister concerned is his son Andrew, a former whip who is implicated in the affair, if we are to believe Dale Campbell-Savours, the Labour MP for Workington.

Campbell-Savours insists that Mitchell's was part of the government whips' conspiracy to suppress a full investigation into the cash-for-questions affair. If he has his way, and persuades Standards and Privileges to investigate, then Mitchell *per se* may have to resign from the committee.

"It would be sad if the first calamity of this investigation were to be Sir David Mitchell, who has done nothing wrong at all," comments one Tory source.

● The Referendum Party is taking its fight to the country's telephone



booths. The party's volunteers have been pulling on their velvet-collared overcoats and jostling with the various masseuses, mature schoolgirls and Russian vivans all piling in to leave their cards beside the handsets. "We are street-fighting men and women here at the Referendum Party," explains an official.

Not he

IT'S TIME to put an end to City rumours concerning Charles Anson, the press secretary to the Queen at Buckingham Palace. There have been suggestions that

he is on the point of taking a lucrative post as director of external affairs at Merrill Lynch, the American bank. City sources have suggested that he has been holding discussions with the bank.

But although recruiting for the job is going on — and the rumoured salary is £250,000 — Merrill Lynch is adamant. "We have no plans to appoint him," says a stickler behind the till. Try Courts.

Check hers

JOHN MAJOR beamed like a baby with a new rattle yesterday as he extolled the virtues of being married to a bestselling author, at a literary lunch to celebrate Norma's book *Chequers: The Prime Minister's Country House*.

There were tribulations, he acknowledged at the Foyles lunch, such as learning how to catch manuscripts that were thrown at him. But the great advantage was that because Norma was so busy writing, he had rediscovered the kitchen. "I learnt how to cook every weekend — a skill that had fallen into disuse over the years."

For guidance on his cuisine, I turned to his brother Terry Major-Ball: "I last lived with him when I was 17, a long time ago," he said. "He used to cook fry-ups all the

time." Norma yesterday insisted his cooking style had developed. "He does a very good roast."

Tape that

SINO-JAPANESE relations were helped along the other day by a coalmining administrator from China. At the end of a speech given in China by the former Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu, Zhang Chonghui raised his broken tape-recorder and said: "My friends can prove that this recorder



"Just one humble pie for Mr Howard"

is out of order. Would you please say words to the Sanyo company? I would like to have personal compensation."

Kaifu managed a dignified response in the face of some audience sniggers: "We'll convey your message to the Sanyo company," he said. "If it's possible, I will try to give you a personal reply. Please believe me: Japanese statisticians always keep their promises."

Back then

ON HIS tour of Uzbekistan, the Prince of Wales has taken an unusual interest in an ancient and blood-spattered copy of the Koran. He also donned a purple Islamic wedding gown. His ancestry suggests why. He is a direct descendant of the senior branch of the Qorish, ruling dynasty of Mecca, and of the prophet Mohammed's great uncle, Abd Shams, a banker. His Islamic genes come via his great grandmother, Queen Mary, whose East European forebears include Ghengis Khan.

● The most notable feature of a cinema that opened in Rome last night was 50 "love seats", designed for couples with amorous intentions. For the romantically inclined, the Cine Bleu is situated



Romantic diptych: Starlike and the duchess deserving each other

In the 15th century Palazzo delle Rovere. "Its seats are marvellous," smoothed one *Casanova*. "They've got rid of that inconvenient armrest." Happily, the picture palace is just yards from the sacred portal of St Peter's Basilica and the Vatican.

Mirror images

BACK down in the cheap seats, we find Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York, busy sketching. On the cover of this week's *Hello!*, the duchess is pictured in a red cassock sitting on the banks of the Rhine, pencil poised over her pad. But what or



whom is she sketching? Turning to Allan Starlike's book on the Duchess, *Fergie: Her Secret Life*, we find a picture of Starlike, then the duchess's right-hand-man, now her nemesis, sitting on the banks of the Rhine also sketching. It emerges that the two photographs form a diptych, having been taken on a trip made by Rhine Valley. So, neatly enough, the duchess's apology is advertised by her sketching Starlike, while Starlike's hatchet job shows him sketching her.

P.H.S



A TOO BOLD BENCH

Citizenship for the Fayed, but not this way

The Court of Appeal may have helped two deserving cases but, in so doing, it has set an unfortunate precedent. Mohammed and Ali Fayed appear to have a good case for British citizenship. Their affection for the United Kingdom, their enterprise and philanthropy recommend them. But any decision on granting citizenship rests with the Home Secretary. In deciding citizenship applications he will have access to information denied others and, very often, impossible to make public. Parliament has decided that ultimate discretion is his and he does not need to justify his decision. In ruling that the Home Secretary should have intimated to the Fayed brothers why he was minded not to grant them citizenship the Court of Appeal is usurping Parliament's authority. What ever the merits of the Fayed's case, it should not be advanced by such means.

The citizenship the Fayed brothers seek is, in their case, a privilege and not a right. The Home Secretary's powers are governed by the 1981 British Nationality Act. Section 44 of the Act states that the Secretary of State "shall not be required to assign any reason for the grant or refusal of any application" and his decision "shall not be subject to appeal to, or review in any court". In passing the 1981 Act Parliament went out of its way to excuse the Home Secretary from any obligation to justify his decision.

Even advocates of the most circumscribed state would allow that the power to decide on citizenship should still be exercised by the government and cannot be delegated elsewhere. Some executive decisions may deserve to be reviewed in the courts but not the exercise of judgment in a matter as fundamental as citizenship. Moreover, when a request must be denied the government may have any number of reasons to withhold the justification. It may wish to prevent an agency, or individual, from being compromised. The Home Secretary's first duty is to safeguard the security of those who are citizens by right.

The Master of the Rolls, however, takes a different view. Lord Woolf's judgment yesterday displayed the creative flair of a brilliant mind. He accepted that Mr Howard did not have to give reasons after his judgment. But he argued that natural justice and fairness should have led the Home Secretary to have intimated the Fayed, before any decision was taken, why he was minded to refuse. Then, they might have had a chance to allay his concerns.

Lord Woolf used "natural justice" as a justification for the creation of a new "right". The inclination of judges to create new rights where none had existed before is, perhaps, driven by a reaction to 17 years of rule by one party. It can, nevertheless, be more damaging to the health of the constitution than any long lease on office. Lord Woolf has already hinted that judges might provide citizens with a right to privacy if Parliament failed to act. In so doing he was looking askance at the principle of parliamentary sovereignty central to our tradition of liberty. With his judgment yesterday, Lord Woolf was not only creating a new right but one in defiance of Parliament's express intentions. Lord Justice Kennedy, in a dissenting judgment, was right when he pointed out that there is no reason to believe that Parliament wanted the 1981 Act to do anything other than relieve the Home Secretary "not only of the obligation to give reasons at the time of... his decision, but also of any duty to indicate... at any earlier stage why he might refuse".

The supremacy of Parliament has been the foundation of the freedoms which have made British citizenship such a desirable prize. Judges, even if actuated from the noblest of motives, should not place themselves in opposition to the clearly expressed will of the Commons.

From Professor Sidney Pollard, FBA

Sir, Ever since industrialised nations have been in competition with each other, those losing some of their markets have tended to accuse the winners of beating them by the "unfair" means of paying low wages or working long hours.

Such accusations are routinely denied. Ours is the first government which not only admits it (reports and leading article, November 13), but is not ashamed to boast that it is deliberately snatching an advantage by the caddish method of breaching the rules which other members of the club are pledged to uphold in the interests of all.

We now have it on the highest authority that after 17 years of Conservative rule we are no longer able to compete on even and "fair" terms with the rest of Europe. It appears that we can hold our own only by imposing on the weakest and most vulnerable members of our society, lower wages, longer hours and much poorer social benefits than are current among our partners.

Yours sincerely,
SIDNEY POLLARD,
34 Bents Road,
Sheffield, South Yorkshire.
November 13.

From Mr David Pepper

Sir, I must agree with the views of Labour's Graham Allen (letter, November 12) on the benefits of the working-time directive.

At this company, a major manufacturer of photographic materials, we have already used the directive as a framework to agree new working practices with our workforce. The result is that our people will improve their output and flexibility whilst reducing our costs. The benefit of the directive is that they know they will be safeguarded from any unreasonable exploitation by the company.

It has never made sense to drive a workforce into large amounts of overtime by poor basic wage rates and bad production planning. I shuddered last week when I heard an advert for skilled sewing machinists at £108 for a 40-hour week — but with the opportunity to earn large amounts of overtime. This is no way to run a company, let alone a modern economy.

If Mr Major needs to pick a fight

with Europe let it be on the issue of enforcement of such directives so that we are all competing on the same basis.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID PEPPER
(Personnel Manager),
Ilford Limited,
Town Lane,
Mossley, Knutsford, Cheshire.
November 12.

From Mr Stanley Best

Sir, When a government finds that a judge does not accept a minister's interpretation of the law it may appeal to the highest court in our land, the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords. If the committee's ruling goes against government then the government can do one of two things: accept the ruling and abide by it or ask Parliament to change the law. If Parliament refuses, the judgment stands. That is democracy in action.

When, however, the decision which the government dislikes is delivered by the European Court and there is no appeal therefrom, what does the government do? It could, if it felt that the situation demanded, ask Parliament to agree to withdraw from Europe. If not, then it must accept the ruling in good heart.

But what does this Government propose? Grudgingly to accept the ruling but instead of arguing for a change in the law in the European Parliament, to endeavour to obstruct the working of that body and of the Commission in the hope that it will gain acceptance of its desire for a further "opt out" clause.

Is that the way to encourage respect for law and order about which ministers, and Mr Howard in particular, are always lecturing us?

Yours faithfully,
STANLEY BEST,
Glebe Cottage,
Broadwoodley, Winkleigh, Devon.
November 12.

From Mr D. C. Godfrey

Sir, Surely the EU ruling on maximum working hours is a victory for Britain — not a defeat. A defeat for John Major and his sweatshop economy maybe, but a great victory for the vast majority of British workers.

The Tories are quick to trumpet the success of our economy. It is hardly a sound one if it depends on denying the

creators of wealth any guarantees of fair wages, working hours or holidays.

A sound economy is built on real jobs with decent pay and conditions. John Major's so-called decency only applies to his friends — the shareholders who are reaping the benefits of this underpaid workforce.

Yours faithfully,
D. C. GODFREY,
13 Old House Gardens,
Park Road, Twickenham, Middlesex.
November 13.

From Mr A. F. Frodsham

Sir, The proposed directive on working time is designed to give an employee the right to decline to work more than 48 hours per week. It does not prohibit a longer working week. Surely an employee should be allowed to decline to work what many people today might regard as excessively long hours?

What an earth is all the fuss about?

Yours etc,
ANTHONY FRODSHAM
(Chairman, Advisory Committee,
European Business Foundation),
36 Fairacres,
Roehampton Lane, SW15.
November 12.

From Mr Peter Farrell

Sir, It is surely somewhat ironic that two categories of worker excluded from current EU workers' hours legislation, introduced on the grounds of health and safety, are junior hospital doctors and transport workers. Whose health and safety, one is tempted to ask — apparently not those of the customer.

Yours faithfully,
PETER FARRELL,
White Heather, Wingham Way,
Peaslake, Guildford, Surrey.
November 12.

From Mr R. A. Haeger

Sir, Your headline on page two today says: "Major pledges to reverse 48-hour week".

Doesn't 84 seem to be a trifle excessive?

Yours sincerely,
R. A. HAEGER,
Apt. 380,
2 Old Brompton Road, SW7.
November 13.

was chosen as a war memorial site in the hope that people would think due respect was being paid to the massacre victims. That the confusion is perpetuated in Gorbachev's memoirs is strange, but I see no need for sinister theories.

Perhaps Gorbachev was not personally responsible for the selection of photographs and/or the captions to which Professor Davies refers. Perhaps he was himself deceived into confusing Khatyn with Katyn. Since Gorbachev makes clear he personally appreciated the full horror of the massacre he can hardly have any motive for attempting to perpetuate the confusion.

Yours faithfully,
RAY WARD,
Flat 97,
17 Sheppard Drive, SE16.
November 6.

Gorbachev and Katyn

From Mr Ray Ward

Sir, Like Professor Norman Davies (letter, November 2), I was at the Times/Dillon's Gorbachev forum last month. I was surprised by the misleading impression he gives of what Gorbachev's memoirs say about the massacre of Polish officers at Katyn and elsewhere.

Professor Davies says that Gorbachev does not call the massacre a crime. However, in the same passage to which Davies refers, Gorbachev mentions a Tass statement describing Katyn as one of the most heinous crimes of Stalinism, and calls the document implicating those to blame a "hellish paper".

Attempts to confuse Khatyn with Katyn go back, as Davies says, a long way, and it is probable that Khatyn

Bacon at the Globe?

From Mr Mark Rylance

Sir, Bernard Levin, in his article of November 1, "A heretic at the Globe", states that I believe that *The Tragedy of Anne Boleyn* proves that Francis Bacon wrote all the plays attributed to William Shakespeare and that I have said I am going to stage this play. I have never said anything of the sort.

In this polygonal "wooden O" in Southwark, I am not interested in anything that would "prove beyond doubt" who Shakespeare was. Uncle Bernard is quite correct when he says "Take it from me again, ducky; anything that 'proves beyond doubt' in this field is *ipso facto* bilge".

We at the Globe are here to encourage and promote the enjoyment and understanding of Shakespeare's plays — and those of his contemporaries — in the belief that an open study of the architecture and society in which Shakespeare played will be enriching.

The Globe brings together the knowledge and expertise of academics, actors, architects and audiences. It is a laboratory and a place of discussion, and will continue to be so for many years to come.

Yours faithfully,
MARK RYLANCE (Artistic Director),
International Shakespeare Globe
Centre Ltd,
Bear Gardens, Southwark, SE1.
November 6.

Millennium dome

From Mr David Gladstone

Sir, In seeking to reassure Lady Pan-funk that "money spent on the Millennium Exhibition will not be squandered", the exhibition's chief executive (letter, November 13) has succeeded only in making her point in spades.

We now know that the only jobs to be created by the expenditure of at least £30 million will be in running the temporary exhibition and that the national heritage will be enriched, once the great architectural bubble has been removed, by some landscaped gardens, park and river walk

for the lucky residents of Greenwich. Can the best brains in the country really not come up with a more imaginative, productive and cost-effective way of spending this vast amount of money?

Yours faithfully,
DAVID GLADSTONE,
1 Mountfort Terrace, NI.
November 13.

Business letters, page 31

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

Care priorities in NHS hospitals

From Dr J. M. E. Anderson and Dr A. P. Warin

Sir, Over recent weeks there has been considerable debate about the funding of the NHS and the ability of the service to meet the demands which will be placed upon it during the winter months (letters, October 25, November 4). In many trusts beds are closed and operating lists have been cancelled.

In Exeter there is a long tradition of co-operation between general practitioners and hospital consultants. This has been largely maintained since the Government's reforms were introduced five years ago. However, the ability to determine the timing of hospital admission for non-urgent cases on the basis of clinical need has recently been removed from doctors.

In August it became clear that the North and East Devon Health Authority had insufficient funds to finance the volume of work which the Royal Devon and Exeter Healthcare NHS Trust could do. As emergency and urgent work has to continue the health authority was obliged to reduce the volume of non-urgent work it could fund.

Accordingly some 2,700 patients who would have had their operations before April 1, 1997, have had them deferred until after that date. Twenty operating lists each week have been cancelled. Inevitably waiting lists will grow and staff morale fall.

However, patients whose care is purchased by other health authorities or GP fundholders can continue to be operated on. Thus, for example, the routine patient requiring a hip replacement from a fundholding practice may be operated on before April 1, whereas a patient from an adjacent non-fundholding practice will not. We are running a two-tier system in Exeter. The fundamental principle that the timing of hospital admission should be determined by clinical need has been breached.

This is wholly unacceptable to hospital consultants and general practitioners, whether they be fundholders or non-fundholders, as it is to our managerial colleagues. But the fact is that the health authority does not have the necessary resources to meet the health needs of our local populations.

Government will of course abdicate any responsibility for this by pointing out that it is for the authority to determine its priorities. It has done so by the only route available to it — reducing the amount of non-urgent surgery done in Exeter and letting the waiting lists grow.

Yours faithfully,
J. M. E. ANDERSON
(General Practitioner,
Chairman, North and East Devon Local Medical Committee),
A. P. WARIN
(Consultant,
Chairman, Exeter Healthcare NHS Trust Joint Medical Staff Committee),
Royal Devon and Exeter Healthcare NHS Trust,
Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital (Worford),
Barrack Road, Exeter, Devon.
November 12.

Firework risks

From Mr C. B. T. Adams, FRCS

Sir, With the greatest respect to my friend and colleague Peter Richards (letter, November 9), the aim of boxing is to inflict physical harm, unlike other sports and fireworks.

Yours faithfully,
C. B. T. ADAMS
(Consultant Neurosurgeon),
Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford.
November 9.

Fast footwork

From Mr Adrian Russell

Sir, Steve Coppell has my sympathy. If we are to believe your report (earlier editions, November 9) that "Of Coppell's first five games in charge, City had won two, lost three and drawn one", then this team clearly needs more than normal management skills.

Yours faithfully,
A. J. RUSSELL,
60 High Street,
Lytchen Matravers, Poole, Dorset.

Blair's hair

From Mr N. Meredith Jones

Sir, Mr Michaelides (letter, November 12) is correct. It is what goes on inside Mr Blair's head, not what covers it that matters. However, is that not the point? Mr Blair's hairstyle neatly encapsulates what many people increasingly perceive to be his credo — "bouffant politics" — all appearance and little substance.

Yours faithfully,
N. MEREDITH JONES,
18 Chapel Street, Liverpool 3.
November 13.

From Dr D. G. Wilson

Sir, It is all so unfair. You run a series of letters about hair, so obviously Mr Beard gets his offering printed (letter, November 5). With my name, what topic could I possibly choose in order to attain this distinction?

Yours faithfully,
TIM WILSON,
9 Banham Close, Cambridge.

FOOD'S FLAT EARTHERS

A debate on hunger distorted by the prophets of doom

Hunger, particularly in children, stunts bodies and minds and lowers resistance to disease. At yesterday's opening of the World Food Summit in Rome, governments declared it to be "intolerable" that around 800 million people, a quarter of the world's population, are malnourished. They undertook to halve that number within 20 years. The United Nations has a deservedly bad reputation for setting unrealistic targets, but provided it can be stripped of doom-mongering myths about impending global famine, this one is harder than most to quarrel with.

Sensible policies must begin with the recognition that the existence of widespread hunger — an evil that has never been absent from the human condition and which at least now rarely takes on the dimension of famine — does not imply that the world cannot grow enough food, now or in future. Food production has been one of the great global successes of the past 50 years. Grain harvests have trebled since 1950, outstripping what may prove to have been the historical high point in population growth. Meat production has grown almost as fast. The gap between average food intake in rich and poor countries has also narrowed.

Pessimists still contend that the margin of safety is uncomfortably narrow; this spring, after three years of poor harvests, global carry-over stocks plummeted and grain prices soared, adding \$4 billion to developing countries' food import bills for 1996. To keep pace with population growth, global yields will have to rise by 75 per cent over the next 30 years. Rising consumption of meat, particularly among Asia's newly affluent, will sharply increase demand for grain. China, once a grain exporter, is now the world's second largest importer.

Once most good land is already under cultivation and cities are growing, yields will have to rise. This will be harder to achieve

on an environmentally sustainable basis than in the past. But there is enormous unrealised potential in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union; and a second "green revolution" could transform prospects — even in Africa, where food production has been falling for 20 years.

Genetic engineering is producing crops that resist pests, need little or no fertiliser and adapt to different climates. What is needed is strong international backing for biogenetics, coupled with schemes to extend these technologies to poor countries while protecting property rights. That will not help subsistence farmers in Asia and Africa for years to come; such technology spreads slowly. But with easier access to small agricultural credits and to markets, simple and cheap techniques could enable many of them to double or treble output.

Market forces are already responding to the price surge. But the West sets a poor example of faith in the marketplace. It has far further to go in curbing export subsidies and ending the practice of dumping food in developing countries, ruining local farmers.

Ample global supplies help to smooth out price fluctuations to which the urban poor and landless labourers are particularly vulnerable. But policies aimed at reducing malnutrition need to look more closely at the demand side of the food equation and help the poor to help themselves. "Food security", that overworked UN mantra, is not a matter of national self-sufficiency in food production. Acute hunger exists in countries with plentiful food supplies and exportable surpluses — and is absent from places such as Hong Kong which are almost devoid of farmland. People go hungry when they can neither grow enough to feed themselves nor earn enough to buy what they need. It is an indication of the muddled state of the food debate that this even needs to be said.

NO TRUMPS FOR COMPUTERS

Chips are no use at the bridge table — or even here

One by one, man's best games are being forced to acknowledge the power of the computer. When the world chess champion Garry Kasparov was beaten in February by a chess program called Deep Blue, a shiver ran through the masters of the game. Kasparov rallied to defeat Deep Blue by four points to two, but a threshold had been crossed. Soon, a silicon chip may prove to be the ultimate grandmaster. Draughts has already turned that corner, while the computer's number-crunching power also makes it a powerful backgammon player.

Until now, however, bridge has remained above the fray. Unlike board games, where everything is open, card games function in a world of imperfect information. Players hide their cards, and intentions, in a complex web of bluff and deception. You can only guess what cards your opponents hold; the possibilities are almost endless and even the fastest of computers struggle to calculate them. Bridge programs have been forced to take short cuts, brutally simplifying the problem to get anywhere at all. So, even the poorest player can defeat them. As one leading US player said, bridge programs would have to improve even to be hopeless.

Bridge players should not, however, rest easy. While programmers have used chess as an assault course training for the even harder task of developing artificial intelli-

gence, bridge has been neglected. After a comparable investment of time and effort, it is perfectly possible that a computer may be able to simulate skills of the bridge table. Using a direct approach which eschews almost all the subtleties of the game but exploits the power of the computer to search through possibilities, Dr Matthew Ginsberg of the University of Oregon believes he has taken a great leap forward. Within a few years, he asserts, computers will be able to play bridge with the best of them.

That may prove over-optimistic. It has taken chess programmers a very long time to get as far as they have, while the more general expression of intelligence by computers still seems a distant dream. The idea, bandied about in the 1960s, that computers would soon exceed man's grasp in many fields of intellect proved to be hubristic. Even child's play turned out to be beyond the capacities of the day. Only recently, with the development of computers that mimic the architecture of the human brain, has substantial progress been made.

It is galling to be beaten at chess by a computer. But no machine has yet written a worthwhile sonnet, translated Homer, deduced a law of nature, or, to set a more realistic target, composed a leading article for *The Times*. With that consolation we must rest content.

War poetry

From Mr Kevin Harrison

Sir, It's surprising to find Philip Larkin quoted at length (November 11) beneath a poppy masthead, on a page devoted to the two-minute silence.

Larkin's horror of war is evident. But his dislike of remembrance ceremonies is emphatic. In 1960, less than six months after writing *MCMXIV*, he was caught up in Remembrance Sunday traffic on his way to London airport. In *Naturally the Foundation will Bear Your Expenses* he writes:

Yet not till I was airborne
Did I recall the date —
That day when Queen and Minister
And Band of Guards and all
Still act their solemn-sinister
Wreath-rubbing in Whitehall.

Anti-war, yes; but despite increasingly right-wing views Larkin remained opposed to what he regarded as pomposity and formal ceremony throughout his life.

Yours faithfully,
KEVIN HARRISON,
Fairlie,
Church Walk, Headcorn, Kent.

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